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Escape from Königstein

*Escape from
Königstein*

ANONYMOUS

NEW YORK

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1944

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The background information about Königstein, and life in this fortress camp was supplied by Michel Bernin, who was a prisoner there. Any similarity in names used in this story to those of high-ranking officers of the French Army is coincidental. All the characters in this book are fictitious.

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I

Twenty Minutes

AT DAWN on June 19, 1940 I was awakened by the familiar roar of the engines of diving airplanes and the rattle of their machine guns, while our own anti-aircraft barked back.

"That's funny," I thought. "I hadn't expected that today."

It wasn't that strafing from the German planes was anything unusual—though this sounded like a particularly sharp attack. We had been getting it every day. I was secretary to the admiral in command of the Northern Naval District of France, centered at Cherbourg, and it seemed to me that the Boches took particular pleasure in shooting us up—possibly because we had no planes to speak of with which to fight back.

But yesterday I had heard the voice of Marshal Pétain over the radio, announcing from Bordeaux that he had asked the Germans for an armistice. We all supposed that meant no more fighting.

I hadn't found it easy to get to sleep that night. The thought that we had been defeated tormented me. My heart was heavy as I thought of what the future might hold for France. With my sober forebodings, there alternated impossible half-dreams, fantastic schemes for organizing renewed resistance, armistice or no armistice, throwing the invaders out of the country, and marching triumphantly on to Berlin. It was in the middle of one such reverie that I drifted off into genuine sleep—only to be awakened by the German air raid.

"Perhaps the Germans wouldn't grant an armistice," I said to myself, as I groped for my shoes. "So much the better. We will go

on fighting, then. Or perhaps the broadcast was a fake. Or Pétain has been removed, and the government is still resisting . . .”

At two p.m. I was on duty at our headquarters, which had been established in the historic chateau of Tourlaville, near Cherbourg. There had been little news. The last report had placed the Germans not far from our retreat; but we hoped either that they might have halted while armistice negotiations were undertaken, or that, if hostilities were continuing, Marshal Pétain and General Weygand would succeed in stopping them by force.

“After all,” a young lieutenant said, in answer to a pessimistic opinion expressed in the dispirited discussion in which he was engaged, “it looked almost as bad at the Marne, but we stopped them before Paris.”

“That was a different war,” a commander answered sharply. “This war isn’t the same. Get some realism into your system, my friend. Stop thinking in terms of last time. This isn’t last time. Because they were stopped then doesn’t mean they’ll be stopped now.”

An orderly entered. He handed me a message. I handed it to the Admiral.

He unfolded it, read it quickly, then rose from his desk and walked to the center of the great room. The officers ceased their conversation and turned towards him expectantly.

“Gentlemen,” Admiral Beaulieu said, “I have just received a radio message from the Vice-Admiral in command at Cherbourg. I shall read it to you:

“‘The Germans have entered Cherbourg. The building of the Port Command is in their hands. They should reach Tourlaville in twenty minutes.’”

No one spoke. Consternation showed in every face. We hadn’t imagined the Germans were as near as that.

“You realize what this means, gentlemen,” the Admiral said. “If the Germans had not arrived until after the signing of the armistice, we would no longer be belligerents. Capture before the signing of the armistice means that we will become prisoners of war. Lambert!”

"Yes, sir," I said.

"Get Captain de Pecquot at once."

I sent a messenger for Pecquot, an aviator assigned to special service with us. His orders were to remain in readiness for immediate call.

"Light the fire," the Admiral ordered next. I moved to the fireplace, in which paper, kindling and logs had already been heaped up, in readiness for just this emergency.

"No!" the Admiral said suddenly. I stopped.

"Better confirm first," he said. "See if you can get Cherbourg on the phone."

I lifted the receiver of the naval communications phone and rang Cherbourg. There was no answer. I tried again—and this time I heard a voice on the other end of the wire. I hung up softly.

The words I had heard were:

"Jawohl . . . wir werden bald dort sein . . ."

The telephone system was already in the enemy's hands.

Lemaistre, the paymaster, seemed surprised when he entered the room at the Admiral's summons and saw the fire blazing in the wide fireplace in spite of the heat of the June day.

"Lemaistre," Admiral Beaulieu asked, "how much money is there in the safe?"

"Five million eight hundred and fifty thousand francs, sir," the paymaster replied.

"Burn it!"

Lemaistre started. Then he realized the situation. We had nearly 6,000,000 francs which must not be allowed to fall into the enemy's hands.

With the help of the other officers, bundles of banknotes were taken from the safe and thrown into the fire. Commander Rigaud, head of the Intelligence Service, started it off by throwing a package of one hundred thousand-franc notes into the flames.

"That's no good," some one said. "They won't burn that way; they'll just singe around the edges. Open the packages first, and scatter the notes in the fire."

We all stood about the fireplace in a circle, tearing open the pack-

ages frantically and throwing them into the fireplace, thousand-franc notes, five-thousands, hundreds. It seemed an unreal, senseless thing to be doing, almost an immoral thing. But we didn't have much time to philosophize about it. Six million francs is a good deal of money, and we only had twenty minutes.

Captain Jacques de Pecquot entered, elegant and handsome as always, and saluted the Admiral as smartly and as ceremoniously as though he were not an old friend of his family.

"The Germans will be here in a few minutes, Pecquot," the Admiral said. "You know your orders. You are to fly our confidential documents to Bordeaux. How quickly can you take off?"

"At once, Admiral," Pecquot answered. "The plane is loaded and already warmed up. I can be in the air within two minutes."

"Good," said the Admiral. "You know where to deliver them."

He held out his hand.

"Good luck!"

Pecquot shook hands.

"Thank you, sir," he said, "and good luck to you."

He saluted, and hurried out.

At the fireplace, Rigaud was carefully tearing the pages out of the code book, the only secret document not in Pecquot's plane, and throwing them one by one into the heart of the fire.

Suspended from a hook on the wall hung Admiral Beaulieu's sword belt, carrying his parade sword. The Admiral walked slowly over to it and took it down. The fire from the burning banknotes, weapons of modern war, cast its brilliant reflection from the steel of the age-old weapon of the wars of many centuries as the Admiral drew it from its sheath. He stood there for a moment, holding the drawn sword in one hand and the scabbard in the other. Then he laid the belt and scabbard softly on the table, put one foot on a chair, and, holding the sword with one hand at the hilt and the other at the point, he brought it down sharply over his knee. The steel was good. It bent, but did not break.

The Admiral drove the point into the floor, and set his foot against it. Then he paused.

"Lambert," he called softly.

I hurried over to him.

"Silly of me," he said gruffly, "but I haven't the heart. Will you take this sword and break it for me? . . . Don't do it here. Outside."

I took the sword, and went out with it; but for the first time since I had served under him, I disobeyed an order of Admiral Beaulieu's. I went out into the park of the chateau, where I knew there was a small grotto. I entered it with some difficulty, rolled aside one or two rocks at its rear, and scooped out a shallow trench for the sword, which I then covered with earth, rolling the rocks back into place over it.

After the war, I thought, I will be able to find it again, and return it to the Admiral. I don't think he will be angry because I disobeyed.

When I reentered the room, the Admiral beckoned to me.

"Lambert," he said to me, "my orderly was killed in this morning's raid. Under the rules of war, I will be permitted to take an orderly to the officers' prison camp with me. How would you like to come with me as my orderly? It's up to you. The alternative, of course, is that instead of coming to the officers' camp you will be sent off to a general prison camp."

"I should like to go with you, sir," I said.

"There is only one objection," the Admiral said, speaking in a low tone of voice, almost a whisper. "An orderly, of course, has to be an ordinary sailor. I should have to demote you."

I was a *second maître*—a chief petty officer. After several months as *quartier maître*, I had been promoted to that rank at Dunkirk, where I had acted as an English-French interpreter, and was assigned to Admiral Beaulieu as his secretary. He was the sort of officer who inspires loyalty and respect in his men. That was why I didn't hesitate for an instant.

I took out my pocketknife and ripped the silver stripes from my sleeve.

II

Crooked Crosses

THE EVENTS which I have related in the preceding chapter came upon us suddenly at Cherbourg. Only a few days earlier, we were still confident of victory. On the 3rd or 4th of June, when bad news was received from the Army, Admiral Beaulieu said to us:

"The battle of the north is lost, but the war is not."

None of us believed then that France could lose the war in the end. We waited for the traditional French counter-attack, but it never came. We thought the enemy might be checked on the Seine—but Paris was surrendered without a fight. Then we decided that the line of defense would be the Loire.

Meanwhile, our own position began to look dangerous. Whatever happened in the south of France, the north seemed definitely cut off.

"I don't intend to be caught like a rat in a trap," the Admiral said to me, as his reports showed the Germans closing in towards us; and he ordered the *Léopard* and the *Courbet* to cruise in the vicinity of Cherbourg, ready to take us off if necessary.

But after June 17, our hopes diminished. I heard Pétain's broadcast alone with the Admiral, in his office. When the old man's voice had ended, the Admiral rose brusquely, walked to the mantelpiece where the radio stood, and switched it off abruptly, with an angry gesture. That was not characteristic of him. He was usually imperturbable, even at the tensest moments.

"That's extremely odd," the Admiral said, "*Extremely* odd." (He was accustomed to speaking quite freely with me.) "How can the Marshal ask for an armistice in advance, without knowing whether it will be granted or not? He might as well surrender! Our troops aren't going to fight after hearing on the air that the High Command

has asked for an armistice. Until they've actually signed, the Germans can walk through us as they please, take as many prisoners as they want, and negotiate at their leisure. They won't be in any hurry to conclude the deal, but we will. We'll have to accept anything they want to force on us. I shouldn't criticize a superior, but I must say that it seems to me that this broadcast will have a deplorable effect. Frankly, I don't understand it. I don't understand it at all. Unless, perhaps, there are some things I don't know about . . . yes . . ."

And suddenly, as though he had hit upon a thought which he didn't want to express even before me, he checked himself, and began to dictate orders.

I understood from the new dispositions the Admiral was taking that the armistice announcement was changing his plans. He had decided now that in view of the projected surrender of the French forces, he could not make immediate plans to escape if the Germans came nearer; but he still hoped that the government would send him orders from Bordeaux to report elsewhere. His opinion was that since the fighting was about to end, he could no longer serve any useful purpose, if the Germans approached, by leaving for some other region in order to continue to serve there. Therefore, he considered himself obliged to remain at the post where he had been placed, even if that meant accepting capture, in the absence of orders to the contrary.

It looked as though capture was a distinct possibility. Tourlaville was located at the end of a small peninsula, surrounded on three sides by the sea. The only possible escape would be by boat. Defending the land approach to it, of course, was not our business. That was the function of the Army; and as far as we could learn, the Army, in our part of the country at least, seemed to have dissolved. Even if we had wanted to replace the Army in covering our headquarters, we had no force with which to do so. All our strength was aboard ship. We were only a sort of office staff, temporarily set down on shore, where we were not expected to have to maintain ourselves.

But the Admiral did not intend to leave anything undone to delay the arrival of the Germans as long as possible. He hoped, probably, that if they were held off long enough, he would receive evacuation orders from Bordeaux. He had radioed for instructions, but got no

answer. The first thing he asked for as he entered his office on the morning of the 18th was whether there had been any reply to his message. There was not. Bordeaux had given no sign of life.

"See if you can find out where the Germans are, Lambert," he said to me.

I set to work by calling up villages surrounding Cherbourg. As soon as a telephone central reported that everything was normal, I tried another village a little farther away. I made nine calls without getting any news about the enemy. On the tenth, when I asked if any one knew where the Germans were, the operator answered: "They are here, *Monsieur*. I can see a German detachment from my window."

"You're sure they're Germans?" I asked, alarmed. I hadn't expected to find them quite so close. "You're not mistaken? They couldn't be British?"

"*Non, non*. I know what the British uniforms look like. These are Germans. Their helmets are different from ours or the British—and then they have those things on their arms—what do you call them?—those crooked Hitler crosses."

I told the Admiral what the girl had said.

"No, she could hardly be mistaken if they're wearing the swastika," he said slowly. "That's bad. Worse than I had expected. I thought there were some British tanks in that region."

"They may have been embarked for England when the armistice news came through," one of the Admiral's aides remarked.

"In that case, we should have known about it," said the Admiral. "Well . . . perhaps they're not worrying about liaison any more. Lambert! Get out these orders."

And he dictated radio messages for the *Léopard* and the *Courbet*, ordering them to shell the crossroads over which the Germans would have to pass to get into the port.

"Perhaps we can hold them up long enough for Bordeaux to make up its mind what it wants us to do," he said.

But on the 19th there was still no word from Bordeaux. The Admiral had all preparations made for what seemed our imminent capture. When the message from Cherbourg that gave us twenty minutes more arrived, we had only to accomplish the last few gestures.

III

Caravan

AN ORDERLY hurried in from the switchboard room, saluted the Admiral hastily, and said: "The first sentry post reports the Germans in sight, sir, coming this way."

"Thank you," said the Admiral, quietly. He rose, said to his officers, "Come, gentlemen," and went out through the main door.

We formed a compact group on the terrace of the chateau. The Admiral stood in front, his highest ranking officers just behind him, the other officers in a group a little farther back, and the rest of us before the doorway and against the wall on either side of it. The only armed guard we had, about fifty *fusiliers marins* (French Marines), were lined up to right and left in a rude half-circle, with ourselves at its center.

Dark clouds had slipped over the sun, which had been shining brilliantly the moment before. They veiled the scene in a slate-blue light which impressed upon me, for the second time that afternoon, a feeling of complete unreality. The scene seemed to be part of a dream. The eerie effect was accentuated by the fact that no one spoke. In the silence, the sound of the water plashing in the fountain before the chateau tinkled clearly in our ears.

And then, unexpectedly, the fountain jet shortened, drew itself into its pipe, and was gone. This mysterious stopping of the fountain made the whole scene seem even more fantasmagoric. Had the approaching Germans shut off the water at some distant main? Had some one within the chateau cut it off? I should have had other, more important, matters on my mind at the moment. But I couldn't get this minor mystery out of it. Who had turned off the fountain? It bothered me, irrationally, inexplicably, as though it were something that it was immensely important for me to know, as though

a logical explanation might have shaken me out of that unreal feeling and brought me back again into a world where fountains didn't stop of themselves and men didn't stand in a chill ghost-like light waiting to surrender to an invisible enemy who might never come.

And then he came.

A column of dust appeared down the road, beyond the iron grill of the gate which guarded the entrance to the chateau park. As it drew nearer, it resolved itself into a swarm of vehicles. Motorcycles with single riders, rifles slung over their shoulders, others with side-cars, a few military cars, trucks for troop transport, even some light armored cars.

At the gate, the procession stopped. German soldiers jumped from one of the trucks, surrounded our sentries, and marched them away. Guards of their own took up their posts at the gate. Seeing us lined up waiting for them, the Germans obviously realized that there would be no resistance. Most of their column remained in the road. Only a small military car, escorted by several motorcyclists, entered the park, and moved slowly up the driveway towards the terrace where we were waiting.

The car stopped a few yards short of the terrace. A German captain emerged, followed by three other officers. The captain in advance, they walked stiffly to the terrace steps, clicked their heels and saluted.

Admiral Beaulieu and the officers standing with him returned the salute.

"You are the officer in command, I presume?" the German captain inquired, in precise French.

Admiral Beaulieu answered, giving his rank and assignment as commander of the Northern Naval District.

"I have to inform you of the decisions which have been taken concerning you," the German captain said. "We are taking all admirals and generals immediately to a special prison camp for general officers only. Each officer may take his orderly, in conformity with international practice. All other ranks will remain here temporarily, until it has been decided what disposition is to be made of them. We will take over command of the premises, and all arms must be given up. The high officers will return with us at once to Cherbourg. I believe there are two such officers here. Is that exact?"

"That is correct," Admiral Beaulieu returned. "Admiral Level, my second in command, and myself are the only two officers here holding admiral's rank. We have, of course, no generals."

"If you will give your parole not to attempt to escape on the way," the German captain said, "you may travel in your own cars."

The promise was given. Beaulieu and Level quickly agreed to ride together in Beaulieu's car, and I was ordered to bring it out. Since the two admirals could take only their orderlies with them, Beaulieu's chauffeur had to be left behind, and Renier and I would have to do the driving.

As I brought the car into the driveway before the terrace, a platoon of German soldiers was just marching up to surround our guard of Marines. The captain of the guard had barely time to give his last order. In the same stentorian voice he would have used if we had not just been taken prisoner, he roared: "The Admiral's car!" The Marines saluted. Admiral Beaulieu returned the salute, and wheeled to salute his officers. Then he and Admiral Level climbed into the back seat of the car, and Renier, closing the door after them, got in with me. I let in the clutch, and we started slowly towards the gate, as the German car swung in behind us and the motorcyclists took up positions on the flank.

From the threatening cloud, the first heavy drops of rain fell to the earth—the rain that we had been praying for to slow up the German mechanized columns for four agonizing weeks of perfect "Hitler weather."

At Cherbourg we found a procession of cars ready formed, waiting only our arrival to start off. In them were the Vice-Admiral of Cherbourg and a number of French generals. The auto of the captain who had come to Tourlaville for us took the lead, followed by those of the generals and admirals. The last arrivals, we took our place on the end of the line, and a German light panzer car carrying a machine gun moved in behind us. In this order we got under way, leaving the narrow, cobbled streets and close-set stone houses of Cherbourg, and engaging ourselves on the long drive through the countryside, the villages and the towns of Normandy.

From time to time we passed lines of German trucks, carrying

supplies in the opposite direction from us, towards the coast. Then a unit of motor-drawn artillery rumbled by. On some of the vehicles were painted, in large white letters, the words, *Nach England*.

We had driven a considerable way—to within about fifteen miles of Rennes, I judged—when I realized that I had not seen the reflection of the machine-gun carrier behind us in my rear-view mirror for some time. I nudged Renier with my elbow. I knew him to be as thoroughly devoted to Admiral Level as I was to Beaulieu, and I judged that we would be in accord.

“Renier,” I said, as softly as possible, “is that German car still behind us?”

Renier glanced first into the mirror, then turned his head to look behind, ending by craning his neck from the side of the car. Finally he faced towards me again, and shook his head. “It must have taken a wrong turn,” he said.

I could see by his expression that his thought was the same as mine.

“Well?” I asked.

He nodded silently.

I slowed down a little, and let the cars ahead of us get gradually out of sight. At the next side road leading to the south, I turned off, and speeded up. But I had hardly gotten started in the new direction when I felt a hand on my shoulder.

“Lambert,” Admiral Beaulieu said quietly, “I have given my word.”

“*Mais, amiral,*” I protested, “does one keep one’s word to a German? It’s your last chance. We can get civilian clothes for you. You can escape.”

“*Mon pauvre ami,*” the Admiral returned. “It doesn’t matter who received my parole. It was given by a French sailor. Turn the car around, Lambert.”

Sick with disappointment, I obeyed the order. I appreciated the importance the Admiral attached to matters of honor, but I would have been less scrupulous with the Germans.

The other cars had gotten well ahead of us, and I had to drive rapidly for nearly an hour to catch the procession. As we approached

it again, I saw that the panzer car was in place once more, bringing up the rear. The men in it were all facing forward, and as we came up behind it, I honked the horn to pass it. Their heads swung around, and when they recognized us as belonging to their body, their expressions of stupefaction were so comical that, in spite of my depression, I couldn't help laughing. They hadn't even noticed our absence. The driver slowed down and waved us angrily into position in front of him, and we were back in the line again.

We made fairly good time on the road when we were moving, but at several of the larger towns through which we passed there were long waits, invariably ended by the arrival of a procession like ours which joined itself to our lengthening line. We seemed to be sweeping the country clean of generals, dragging them in like a magnet as we passed along. Our caravan became a pageant of the highest officers in the French Army, containing, perhaps, more generals than had ever been gathered together in one place anywhere before.

As we passed through the countryside, peasants stopped their work in the fields to stare at us. Some of them shook their fists at the German cars which accompanied us, shouting insults at their occupants. In one village, where we had stopped for a few moments, I stepped out of the car to stretch my legs. A simply dressed woman came up to me and pressed some cigarettes and a few cookies into my hands.

"Courage," she said. "Their turn will come soon."

And as she looked into my eyes, I saw the sun reflected in the brimming liquid which filled them and threatened to overflow.

It took us four days to reach the German border. We spent our nights in requisitioned houses, except once, when we slept—very badly—in the cars. We got very little food, and would have been half-starved if it hadn't been that our car was always stocked with canned rations, in case of emergency.

The German officers, who had been polite enough when we started, seemed to get more surly as we progressed. I judged it was the result of the evident hostility of the population of the regions through

which we passed. Although they sat upright and rigid in their cars, pretending not to hear the insults shouted at them as we roared by, they seemed to have taken effect.

When we entered the small town of Laval, and paused before the *mairie* for one of the brief scheduled stops, we found a good part of the population gathered in the square. It looked as though the news of our passage had gotten there ahead of us. They closed in silently about our cars, quiet, but with expressions of determination on their faces. There were several hundred of them, most of them beyond middle age, the majority men, but with a sizable proportion of women.

The German captain looked nervous. He went into the *mairie*, passing through the crowd which seemed silently to flow away before him as the peasants drew back reluctantly, as though they were making way for him because they feared to be soiled if he brushed against them, and then flowed back again behind him.

Through the window of the *mairie* I could see the German captain at the telephone. When he returned, he passed again through the crowd which opened to receive him and closed in behind him, for all the world like a speck of foreign matter moving through the viscous body of an amoeba. He climbed into his car, and sat there, silent. I expected him to give the signal to go on, for we were only supposed to stop for a fifteen-minute breather. But he didn't offer to move.

The crowd increased, pouring into the square from all the side streets, three and four at a time, until there must have been nearly five hundred people in the square. Their silence was the most curious thing about them. Except for occasional low remarks to one another, they said nothing. They simply stared, with looks of hatred for the Germans, and of comradeship for us. I felt that they were working up courage to attack the Germans and free us. There were enough of them to overpower and disarm the few German cars, though some of them would certainly have been killed in the process.

I felt that some movement was required to start them into action. For instance, if the captain had attempted to put his lead car into motion, I would have expected the hostile crowd to surge forward and drag its occupants out. Perhaps he thought so, too. Perhaps that

was why he didn't dare start. He simply sat there, motionless, and waited.

We had been there almost an hour. How long, I wondered, could this stalemate last? Was the German captain simply holding on to see who would get tired first? Was he waiting for the people to give up and begin slipping away? Was he afraid to try to move out of the town?

There was a rumble down the road to the east. In the distance, four light tanks appeared, coming towards us. At sight of them, the German captain rose in his car, shouted at the French to get out of the way, and ordered his driver to go ahead. The tanks were almost upon us, their tops down, and their turret guns swinging significantly from side to side. The crowd melted away, and we were off again. I knew now why the German officer had telephoned.

IV

Object Lesson

OUR FOUR-DAY trek across France brought us to the German frontier at Waxweiler. There was another addition to our procession waiting there—two German buses containing thirty-six French generals and their orderlies.

Among them Admiral Beaulieu found an old friend of his—General Verger. They wanted to ride together, so I abandoned the steering wheel to Renier (I was tired enough of it, after having driven all the way across France), and moved into one of the buses to continue the trip. The fifteen generals in this bus sat in the front seats, and their orderlies in the rear. They were silent most of the way; but every once in a while, conversation would break out among them. It was always on the same theme: "Why were we beaten?"

"We were definitely under-equipped," one of the generals said fiercely, on one of those occasions. "Do you know what some of my men had? Three cartridges apiece, practically no machine-gun ammunition, and no shells at all! And our air! Did you see any French planes in your sector? I didn't. Nothing but enemy craft. That's what the Popular Front did for us!"

"Yes," said a second general, "if all those politicians hadn't been running the show . . ."

But a third officer interrupted him.

"Suppose we stop blaming the politicians and look at our own shortcomings," he said. "Why didn't we cover the Ardennes region, where the Germans came through? Why didn't we counter-attack on the Somme and break through the German line when it was extended so dangerously towards the sea? Why did we get nothing but orders to retreat? Believe me, gentlemen, there was something very wrong in the General Staff."

The others glared at him, and turned to looking out of the windows. I didn't find the scenery very pleasant myself. The country we were moving through now was not French, but German, and the malevolent attention of the people who saw us pass was directed at us instead of at our captors.

I wondered if it was the German Propaganda Ministry that had arranged for us to stop in the market places of all the German towns through which we passed. I had the feeling that we were being put on exhibition, like trophies of the chase. We were not quite being paraded through the streets chained to the chariot wheels of the victors, as for a Roman triumph, but the spectacle we afforded seemed to be akin to that. Wherever we stopped, the streets were crowded, and I felt that the people must have been invited in advance to come and gape at the sensational catch of generals their armies had made.

The Germans seemed to look upon our officers as freaks brought into Germany for their amusement. They gazed at us with hostile, contemptuous smiles. But they were not as bold as the French peasants who had shouted at the passing Germans. They didn't dare to address us openly. But the air was filled with ironical remarks and insults, often in French, ostensibly addressed to others, but very plainly meant for us.

At Coblenz we were held for two hours in the center of the city, while the people pressed about us, staring. The women held their children up to look at us, as though we were animals in a zoo. Children wearing the swastika on their arms pointed at the starred caps, and croaked: "*Generale! Schaut doch! Generale!*"

The generals sat in the buses and their cars amid the mocking crowd, pale and with compressed lips, but without ever losing their tempers. One or two of them even risked getting out to try to get a drink of water from the public fountain, which they succeeded in reaching at the cost of some "accidental" pushing from the crowd. But the others preferred to remain thirsty when one such carefully careless shove against a general's elbow as he was drinking caused him to be doused with water. The crowd roared and hooted as he went back to his car, wiping his face with his handkerchief.

The last group of generals to join us were picked up just before we reached Mainz. These were some of the first men to be captured, in the Battle of France in May. They had been held in a prison camp near Berlin, and now were to accompany us to our destination, whatever it might be.

Among them was one of France's foremost officers, General de Rensac, who wore the five stars of a full general on his sleeve. He was an imposing figure, tall, spare and dignified. He spoke slowly and moved with deliberation. As he stood on the sidewalk chatting with some of his fellow-officers when our caravan drove up, he seemed as unconcerned as if he were in his own headquarters, instead of being a prisoner of war, waiting to be taken away to enemy territory.

He had, it is true, had the experience of having been a captive of the Germans before. Taken by them in the last war, he had escaped, been recaptured, and escaped again, the second time for good. This time his zeal had been his undoing. Venturing personally on a reconnaissance mission in a light tank ahead of his lines, he had been surprised by an enemy scouting force, and captured. His command was at the crucial position at the flank of the Maginot Line where the Germans came through; and it may have been his capture which changed the whole complexion of the Battle of France.

General de Rensac had not been with us very long when our procession drove up before a military camp, and stopped at its entrance. The German captain who was conducting us got out of his car and entered the camp, returning several minutes later with a German general. The two officers walked up to the French generals, who had taken advantage of the stop away from insolent crowds to get out and stretch their legs. The German general, in French which was without too strong an accent, inquired: "Which of you is General de Rensac?"

Rensac, who was chatting with a group of fellow-officers a short distance away, turned, and said, with a note of surprise in his voice: "I am General de Rensac."

Conversations stopped, and all of us waited for the next words. We sensed that something out of the ordinary was about to happen.

The German general took a few steps towards Rensac.

"I have received orders, *Monsieur*," he said, "to hold you here, where you will be tried according to martial law."

General de Rensac answered stiffly:

"I am a prisoner of war, in your custody and entirely at your mercy. I am powerless to prevent you from disposing of me as you choose. I am, however, obliged to protest formally against this violation of international law. In fighting against you, I was simply doing my duty as a soldier. The laws of war do not permit you to prosecute me for that."

The German returned:

"You do not understand, *Monsieur*. You are not to be tried for carrying out your military duties. The charge against you is the common crime of murder. You ordered the killing of two German citizens in northern France. We intend to make you answer for that act."

"I presume you refer," said Rensac, "to the two German spies whose execution I ordered when they were dropped by parachute behind our lines, dressed in civilian clothes. In time of war, spying is universally punishable by death. I acted as you, or any other officer, would have acted in similar circumstance. I am willing to assume full responsibility for that act. If a like case should occur again, I would give the same orders."

"This is not a court, General," the German said curtly. "You will have an opportunity to defend yourself later. I must ask you now to come with me."

Rensac turned his back on the German, and, smiling and perfectly at ease, shook hands with General Verger, Admiral Beaulieu, and some of the other officers, as politely and as unconcerned as though he were simply saying good-bye after a casual encounter, and disappeared with the German general into the precincts of the camp.

There was an angry hum of protest from the generals standing about in small groups as Rensac left, but already the Germans were shouting orders to get into the cars and start off again. It was obvious that the halt had been made here by prearrangement for the sole purpose of handing Rensac over, and obvious also that the Germans wanted the other generals to see how they planned to treat Rensac. It was intended, no doubt, as a salutary object lesson.

For a moment, they seemed hesitant about getting into the cars. But there was, after all, nothing they could do, and they finally all climbed into their places again, and the line moved off once more. I was back in the Admiral's car, Renier having been sent to take my place in the bus. The two admirals in the back seat, and General Verger beside me in front, were all silent, their faces expressing the indignation they failed to utter. We rolled on through Germany.

V

No Escape

IT WAS on the seventh day of our long drive. I was at the wheel again, where I had begun to feel as though I would remain forever, in a new sort of existence in which this car had become my permanent home. Our tired and discouraged convoy was rolling along by the Elbe River. For some time, no one had said anything. Suddenly, from the rear seat, Admiral Beaulieu spoke up: "Look!" he said. "See that old castle! It looks like a real eagle's nest!"

We followed his gesture with our eyes. Ahead and to one side of us rose a cone-shaped mountain, dominating the valley; and on its crest stood a medieval castle. There was no sign of any path up this imposing heap of rock, and I wondered idly how one got to it.

The line of cars headed to the mountain, which seemed to grow and expand as we came nearer to it, until it overwhelmed us with its mass, and caught us all in its shadow. As the road came close to the massive wall of rock towering above us, I heard the squeal of brakes ahead of us as the leading cars slowed to a stop. I came to a halt behind them, and, as I did, I realized at once that this must be our goal. That eagle's nest, perched high above the valley, was the prison towards which we had been making our weary way for the past week.

We stepped out of the cars. Above us, the overpowering inhuman wall soared straight upwards. It seemed to be the only reality in this spot, blotting out the sky, and reducing us to the scale and unimportance of insects. With a common accord, the generals threw back their heads, and strained their necks, trying to look up to the top. No doubt all were wondering, like myself: "How does one get up there?" and perhaps already, "And is there any way of getting

out?" There didn't seem to be any path up the mountainside, which was too precipitous to carry one, and I couldn't imagine how the building on top was reached.

I soon found out. A company of guards appeared. We were lined up, the command, "*Vorwärts, Marsch!*" was shouted at us, and we started, surrounded by the guards, up a steep ramp. This brought us to a sort of rocky platform, a ledge clinging closely to the mountainside, and there the mystery was solved. The black gap of a tunnel entrance loomed before us. The last lap of the way to the top was not *up* the mountain; it was *through* the mountain—by means of a passage drilled through the solid rock.

The ascent was a difficult one. As we struggled upward, the path grew steeper—incredibly steep. I felt at times as though the pitch were 35 or 40 degrees. The tunnel was lighted feebly by infrequent lamps, and at the midpoints between them we had to grope our way, feeling for the walls with our hands. The ascent was not a stairway, simply an incline, and though we wore hobnailed military shoes, there was little purchase on the rock, worn smooth by the march of centuries. We constantly slipped back, sometimes walking almost on all fours, leaning forward and touching the floor ahead of us with our hands at each step. The generals, mostly well along in years, were breathing heavily with the effort and the heat, which, inside the stone heart of the mountain, was stifling. The younger orderlies helped them along by pushing from the rear. And each time we emerged into the little zone of light about a lamp, and our struggling shadows loomed monstrous and grotesque, distorting themselves over the walls and ceiling, I thought how sardonic a spectacle we were providing for the German sentries, as French soldiers and sailors shoved their generals and admirals closer towards the confines of an enemy prison.

Those sentries were posted at each turning in the spiral passage. The Germans had neglected no precaution. We stopped before each sentry post (and we were very glad of the respite), while the sentinel telephoned to the next guard above him that we were about to arrive. We were told later, when the rules of the prison were announced to us, that each guard was ordered to shoot on sight if any one appeared in the tunnel without having previously been an-

nounced to him. I also learned later that our struggle to the top was quite unnecessary, for there was one other way of reaching the top of the mountain—a freight elevator, rising through a shaft also cut through the rock on the other side. But it was strongly forbidden to let prisoners use the elevator, and, to the hide-bound German mind, that settled that matter forever. Regardless of rank or age, the generals could not be permitted to use a means of ascent that had once been ticketed as forbidden.

The interminable climb finally ended, and we came out into brilliant sunlight, which made us all cover our eyes with our hands, and stand blinking and blinded for a moment after emerging from the darkness. We felt suddenly cold also, as we exchanged the sultry tunnel atmosphere for the wind that swept the mountain-top. We found ourselves standing in the courtyard of a fort, which overlooked the valley from so great a height that we seemed to be viewing it from a plane. But few of us had any eyes for such details at the moment. The strongest of us were exhausted by the climb.

I don't know what the others thought when they reached the top; but I remember my own first reaction. It was: "This is one prison from which there will be no escape."

The castle which had been chosen as the prison for the French generals and admirals had been a historic monument for generations. It was the famous Königstein (King's Rock), the name at once of the castle, the mountain, and the small village at its foot.

No one had taken the trouble even to tell us the name of our prison, and it was only some days later that I learned a little about the history of the place. It had been named for Wencel I, King of Bohemia, who had built the castle about 1240. In spite of its 700 years, it was still perfectly habitable, having been regularly repaired. From the sixteenth century onward, it was the property of the Kings of Saxony, who had received there the visits of the emperors and kings of many countries (I wondered if they had found the climb in those days as difficult as we had found it in the twentieth century). Of recent years, the castle had been a museum. Some time after Hitler came to power, he converted it into a place of retreat for those of his more highly placed followers whom he wished to

consign to temporary banishment. And in June, 1940, it became the "Prison of the Generals."

We were not the first inmates to arrive at Königstein. We had been preceded by a few generals who were already installed when we got there. Altogether, the august prisoners numbered 120!

One hundred and twenty generals and admirals! I was shocked and staggered when I heard that figure. It made me realize the full extent of the catastrophe which had come upon my country. Here were the best French officers—shut up together in a single prison, after a campaign which, in its active phase, had lasted only some six weeks!

As our exhausted group staggered out of the tunnel exit into this place of captivity for the military brains of France, some of the generals, throwing dignity to the winds, sank down upon the ground. Others, blinking in the sun, looked around for shade. The court which we had entered was completely exposed to the sun, but in one corner there was a small garden, surrounded by a few low trees. Three of the generals summoned up enough strength to move towards this shelter, but a sentinel intercepted them with a sharp, "*Verboten!*" and they had to turn back and rejoin their fellows.

There was a long tiresome wait as we were called in a few at a time, for individual questioning. It began with the highest ranking generals, who were summoned first to the office of the Commandant. Naturally, we orderlies, who were last, were kept standing about for what seemed hours before being called.

In the meantime, the few prisoners already at Königstein appeared to greet the newcomers. They were glad to see them, in a way. It meant more company, and their arrival was a relief from the monotony of the daily routine, which they had already begun to feel, although the first arrivals had only been there for three or four weeks.

It was surprising to see how quickly this short captivity had deteriorated the traditional smartness of the French general officers. Their uniforms were torn and wrinkled, for they had no facilities for mending them, and no spare costumes to permit a change of clothing. Many of them, who had been captured wearing muddy field boots, had been unable to restore them to any semblance of

cleanliness, since they lacked everything necessary—brushes, rags, polish.

But they advanced in their tattered uniforms and dirty boots to meet the newcomers with all the suave and urbane manners of the well-bred officer in a fashionable salon, greeting old friends as if they were meeting them in Paris, not in a German prison, and acknowledging formal introductions to those they did not know just as though there did not already exist between them the bond of prisoners sharing a common fate. I marvelled at the way the social veneer of their caste remained uncracked, even under these exceptional conditions, as I heard the polite phrases with which they greeted one another:

"How charming to see you again, *mon cher général*! Let me see—our last meeting, I believe, was when you took command of the 15th Division. I had just been called back to General Headquarters, and so didn't have an opportunity to see you again."

"Yes, yes, that *was* the last time. Permit me, General . . . Admiral X—General Y, commander of the Nth Army."

"I'm enchanted to meet you, Admiral. What kind of a trip did you have here?"

"Rather tiresome, I'm afraid. How do you find the quarters here? Do they put us up decently?"

And so forth and so on. I might have shut my eyes and imagined myself in the lobby of a luxurious hotel.

My wonder at this sort of conversation was terminated by a summons to appear in my turn for examination. The questioning—in very good French—was routine, and entirely correct. After forms had been filled out identifying me (correctly, except for the one detail that I gave my rank as ordinary sailor), I was searched. All my papers were taken from me, along with my money, my fountain pen, and my cigarette lighter. The German officer who conducted the search returned only one object to my wallet before he handed it back to me. That was the photograph of a pretty girl, smiling radiantly, a good friend of mine, which he looked at closely before he stowed it away, remarking to me with evident admiration, "*Très parisien!*"

VI

Regulations

WHEN THE examination of the new arrivals was finished, assignments to living quarters were made. The generals and admirals were installed first, and we orderlies accompanied our masters to their rooms, in order to know where we would find them, and also, in the case of those fortunate ones who had baggage, to carry their belongings.

The officers were quartered in the buildings which surrounded the courtyard. *Gebäude* I and II were of stone, and here the highest-ranking officers, the four- and five-star men, were sent. *Gebäude* III and IV, which were wooden, were turned over to the lesser lights.

Being a full admiral, Beaulieu was put down for *Gebäude* I. It was a honeycomb of small rooms, lining either side of a long corridor, furnished, according to their size, to receive one, two, three or four officers. Admiral Beaulieu was given Room 24, one of the smallest rooms, but which gave him the privilege of privacy, since it was for a single person.

Its furniture was reduced to an absolute minimum. It contained a bed, a table, and a hat rack. There was no chair. If the Admiral wanted to write on the table, he had to sit on the bed. There was no room for a closet of any kind, and the hat rack was therefore the only place where he could hang his clothes. This was no great inconvenience, since he had only what he was wearing when he was captured.

As soon as the officers had been installed in their new homes, the orderlies were assembled. We were lined up in the courtyard, and the commander of the prison, a German lieutenant named Greffe,

strode out of his office and across the court, taking up a position in front of us, where he stood in silence for a moment, arms akimbo, and legs planted wide apart, regarding us with an expression of the deepest contempt. He had a face like a bulldog. I didn't relish the idea that he was going to be the master of my fate.

"*Achtung!*" he barked suddenly, and then shifted to French, harsh and guttural, but not difficult to understand.

"I am in command here until the permanent commander arrives. He will be a general. I do not propose to insult a German general by presenting to him such miserable soldiers as you are. Before he arrives you will have to learn to be *real* soldiers—what we Germans call soldiers. *Natürlich*, you could not learn that in your country. If France had known how to make soldiers, you would not be here.

"We are going to teach you how to behave in a military fashion, how to salute, how to march. Sergeant!"

A German sergeant sprang to attention before the commander, saluting stiffly.

"Sergeant, at 5 o'clock every morning, you will give these men two hours' drill, before they report to their officers, according to the German military manual. You will do your best to make them look like soldiers, at least. Now show them their quarters, then read the rules of the camp to them."

The announcement that we were going to be put through the paces of the German manual under a German drill master every morning was as unexpected as it was distasteful to us. The sergeant gave us no time to think it over. He lined us up by twos, and marched us to a low building of unprepossessing appearance which seemed to be mostly underground. At his command, we descended a long flight of stairs, and then filed through a corridor leading to one of the casemates of the fort, about twenty feet underground. I noted patches of dampness on the walls. The floor was wet underfoot.

Heavy doors, widely spaced along the corridor, indicated that the casemate was divided into large rooms. At the fifth door, the sergeant gave the command to halt. He unlocked it with a massive key, and ordered the first fourteen of us inside. This was to be our home as long as we were in the prison camp.

It was no very pleasant haven. The room was a sort of cellar, with

an arched ceiling, like that of a wine cellar. There were two windows, closed with iron bars, but they opened on the corridor, not to the outside air, so our dormitory was necessarily dark and airless. Walls and floor were damp, as in the corridor, and the musty smell of an underground room where the sun never enters hung thick in the air.

The furniture consisted of a single long table, and two rows of wooden beds, on each of which was piled some straw instead of a mattress, and a single blanket. The sergeant ordered us to choose our beds. It wasn't difficult, for none of them offered any advantages over any other. While we were settling that question, the other orderlies were marched off to what I assumed were similar rooms.

Ten minutes later we were ordered out again, and lined up in the courtyard once more. The sergeant set to work to try to get us into perfect alignment, but he didn't get much cooperation, and he let us remain in a distinctly ragged double line while he read to us, in heavily accented French, the rules and regulations of Oflag IV B, which we learned was the official designation of Königstein.

There were scores of regulations. The last two paragraphs went something like this:

"Prisoners are not permitted to spit at less than three yards' distance from a German soldier or officer.

"If for any reason whatsoever, a German woman is encountered in the camp, it is strictly forbidden to look at her. Prisoners who try to enter into conversation with any German woman will be punished by three to six months in solitary confinement. Prisoners who try to approach and embrace such a woman will be punished by three to six years at hard labor. Prisoners who attempt to have sexual intercourse with such a woman will be punished by death."

We looked at one another without a word.

"Dismissed!" the sergeant barked.

We broke up into small groups. I remained standing with Renier, Savignon, a youngster from Bordeaux, and one or two others.

"*Attention, mes enfants,*" Savignon said, with careful seriousness. "We have got to get those regulations straight. Now about spitting, for instance—we had better practise our distances. Like this, for instance."

He walked across the courtyard, approaching one of the German sentinels, gazed at him and back at the ground with elaborate care, and with a comic expression of the greatest conscientiousness, spat carefully at a distance of about five yards. Then he shook his head as though dissatisfied, trying again, a little closer.

The German sentry, who didn't appear to be a particularly imaginative type, didn't budge. But we could see him, from a corner of his eye, mentally measuring off the distance. He knew the regulations, too, and was prepared to act on the official theory that spitting at a distance of two yards 35 inches was an insult to a German soldier, but at three yards one inch it was all right.

Some of the younger and more irrepressible orderlies joined Savignon, and all of them, with wrinkled brows and expressions of the greatest gravity, set to work at the task of practising spitting as close as possible to three yards from the sentry. I couldn't imagine a French soldier failing to react under the circumstances. But the German didn't budge, remaining motionless as a statue, a real automaton bound by the letter of the regulations.

"So that," I thought, "is the improvement Lieutenant Greffe wants to make on us!"

I reached into an inside pocket in my uniform which the searching Germans hadn't discovered, and drew out the single cigarette and the few matches I had hidden there. I lighted it and drew in a whiff of the fragrant smoke. Then I glanced towards Renier, and saw him looking at me with envious eyes. I handed the cigarette to him, and we smoked it to the end, puff for puff, making it last as long as we could. Neither of us knew when we would be likely to get a smoke again.

At lunch time, we were initiated into the commissary routine. We were given two messkits each, one for ourselves and one for our officers. Both were filled at the same time. We were to take the officers their food first, then return to the casemate and eat our own.

When I came back from serving Admiral Beaulieu, I found that our dormitory had a new arrival, about whom all those who had returned from waiting on their officers were clustered. It was the orderly of General de Rensac, who had been taken from our party

for trial, and who had just arrived at Königstein, only a few hours behind us.

The orderly was telling what had happened. He said that Rensac had been brought before a military tribunal the day after he had been removed from our group. The judges were three German generals, and when Rensac was asked what his defense was, he uttered just one sentence. Addressing the presiding officer, he said:

"If you, general, had arrested two Frenchmen in civilian clothes who had just dropped behind your lines by parachute at a moment of active military operations, what would you have done to them?"

The three generals put their heads together, and talked for a moment in whispers. Then they announced a recess of the session.

It was never resumed, and on the following day a German officer took Rensac and his orderly from the camp to a train, which had brought them to Königstein in good enough time to wipe out our two days' head start. They were not informed that he had been acquitted, or told anything whatsoever about the decision of the judges. They could only assume that the Germans had decided that it was wiser not to attempt to press so ridiculous a charge against Rensac.

VII

Traitor?

AT 7 P.M., after we had served supper to our officers, we were ordered into the casemate, and the heavy iron doors were locked behind us.

This was the first time that we had been shut up together. Most of us still didn't know one another, and we set to work to get acquainted. I myself knew several men from the Northern Naval Command, but the others were strangers to me.

It became plain at once that we would be a congenial group. In our common plight, we got on friendly terms in a matter of minutes, and we were soon joking and laughing together as light-heartedly as though we were not locked into an unbreakable jail in the heart of enemy territory.

General de Rensac's orderly had taken the bed next to mine. I went over to him as he was arranging his few belongings upon it. He hadn't joined in the general introductions, and I thought he seemed rather ill at ease and diffident.

When I had first seen him, at noon, I had been plagued with a baffling feeling that I had met him somewhere before, but I couldn't remember where or when or under what circumstances. I judged that probably it was because our previous meeting, if there had been one, had occurred in very different surroundings, and that was what prevented me from placing him. I tried to imagine him in civilian clothes, with the thought that I might have met him somewhere before the war, but it didn't work.

I thought his name might awake a memory, so I introduced myself and asked his name.

"Janson," he said, "Pierre Janson."

The name meant nothing to me. I wrinkled my brows, trying to

recall the lost memory by sheer mental effort. But I still drew a blank.

"Haven't we met somewhere before?" I asked. "Your face is very familiar to me, but I can't place you."

"I don't think so," he said.

I gazed at him, still puzzled. His eyes, in particular, seemed to recall the past. There was a peculiar sparkle to them, an intelligence of expression which seemed to dwell in my memory. Suddenly, the whole picture was brushed in as if by magic around those eyes, and I remembered where I had noted their particularly alert expression once before.

"*Mon capitaine,*" I said softly, "what are you doing here among the orderlies?"

For I had at last recognized "Pierre Janson" as Captain Darceau, General de Rensac's aide. I had seen him some weeks previously when, as Admiral Beaulieu's secretary, I had accompanied him to a conference at Arras. The admiral and the general had talked alone for a while, in the office of the Prefect, while their staffs waited in the next room. There I had chatted for twenty minutes or so with Captain Darceau.

Darceau put his finger to his lips. I realized that he didn't wish the other orderlies to know of his identity.

"It's this way," he said. "General de Rensac, as you know, was taken prisoner in the last war and escaped; it was only natural that his first thought when he saw that capture was inevitable was of trying to get away again this time. We were taken, as you know, in a tank, and made prisoners with only what we happened to have on to wear. I had on battle dress, with no insignia of rank. The general suggested that if I came along with him as his orderly, the two of us might have a better chance, working together, to get him out. So I exchanged papers with a private in the tank, and here I am."

"And now that you are here," I asked, "do you think there is any chance of escaping from this eagle's nest?"

"I admit it doesn't look easy," Darceau said, "but there's no such thing as a prison from which there's no possibility of escape. There are a great many things we'll have to do, of course—get hold of

civilian clothes, possibly enlist somebody's help, find out if there aren't alternative ways out of here, and so forth."

"I thought of the possibility of escape myself, naturally," I said, "but when I got a look at that tunnel we came in by, I came to the conclusion that this is practically an impossible place to get away from. I don't see how it can be done."

"Neither do I—yet," said Darceau. "But I don't propose to allow myself to be discouraged so easily. I haven't got any program, but I'm here precisely to see if I can't figure one out. I don't think the Germans are so thorough that they never make mistakes—in fact, maybe I'll find a weak point in their very thoroughness. No one's superhuman, you know. They're bound to have overlooked something."

"Well," I said, a little doubtfully, "I wish you luck."

"Don't breathe a word of this to a soul," Darceau said. "You know how it is—if more than two people know a secret, it isn't a secret any longer. I shouldn't want my identity to become known. The Germans would have me out of here immediately."

"You don't need to worry about the orderlies," I returned. "The men here can all be trusted. They all have the confidence of their officers, to begin with. They all seem to be fine, decent chaps, and I know a few of them personally whom I could vouch for under any circumstances—like Renier, Admiral Level's orderly, or Gaston, who is with General Verger. They might be useful to you. I know you could count on their help. If you wish, I might speak to them."

"*Non, non,*" said the captain, nervously. "At least, not yet. I want to know them myself, to look into their eyes myself, before they learn anything. In any case, what's the point of confiding in them unless I have something for them to do? No, decidedly, don't tell any one before we need him."

At 5 A.M., the iron door of our room was thrown open with a clang. The German *Feldwebel* entered, roaring: "Out of bed! *Donnerwetter!* Do you think you're in the Palace Hotel here?"

Softened by his self-appreciation of his own humor, he added:

"All right. For this first morning, I will not report you. But hereafter, every morning, at five sharp, I want you out in the courtyard,

ready to start your drill. You will hear the bugle at 4.30. It will be blown in the corridor. Now! Dress quickly, and report in the courtyard."

A few minutes later, our first drill began—on the goose-step. The *Feldwebel* found us very bad pupils. The unnatural pompous stride struck us as simply ludicrous, and our chief difficulty was to keep from laughing out loud at our own attempts, which would probably have earned us some punishment. So we refrained. But evidently our success was far beneath the *Feldwebel's* expectations, for he exploded:

"*Ach!* There is no hope for these *verdammte* Frenchmen!"

He shifted to saluting. First he demanded that we salute, shaking his head rapidly to and fro in horror when we complied.

"You have not the slightest idea, not the slightest idea, of how a soldier should salute!" he spluttered. "Here! I will show you how a German salutes. So!" And he demonstrated the stiff German gesture, so foreign to our own habits.

Until 7 o'clock, he had us marching up and down, individually, passing before him one at a time, goose-stepping and saluting as we passed. Our efforts filled him with despair. At 7, I thought we would be rid of him, and sent to perform our duties to our officers. But no! He ordered us to form a circle about him, and began to deliver a lecture on the New Germany.

He had only been talking for a few minutes, when the tall figure of General de Rensac appeared in the courtyard. We sprang to attention and saluted—French style. The general returned the salute, and passed by, remarking as he did so:

"Don't believe a word of what he says, *mes enfants*. It's all a pack of lies. Don't forget that you're Frenchmen."

The *Feldwebel's* face contorted with rage. For a moment, we expected him to rush after the general. But then he mastered himself, growled, "Dismissed!" and hurried off towards the building where Lieutenant Greffe had his office, no doubt to report this unseemly incident.

"Do you think that will cause any trouble, *mon capitaine*?" I whispered to Darceau.

"I doubt it," he said. "What could they do? They can't forbid a

French officer to give encouragement to his own men . . . The general's an amazing man—as unbending as a steel rod. I wish more of the others were like him.”

We stood in a long line before the kitchen. Each of us had his two messkits, one for our morning soup, one for that of the officers. Captain Darceau stood a few places before me. Knowing his identity, I looked him over curiously, seeking some sign in his bearing or manner which might betray the officer, but he seemed indistinguishable from the privates who surrounded him.

Darceau had just reached the soup pots, and had set his two kits down before them, when the German soldier who had been ladling out the soup, snapped to attention. I looked around, and saw Lieutenant Greffe.

“Which of you is Pierre Janson?” he asked in a loud voice.

Darceau took a step forward.

“I am,” he said.

The German lieutenant said:

“Is there no discipline in the French Army? Is that the way a private addresses an officer?”

Darceau opened his mouth to correct himself, but Greffe interrupted him:

“Never mind—er—*Private* Janson,” he said, in a sarcastic tone of voice. “I think I understand your lapse.”

Then, suddenly, with biting incisiveness, he whipped out:

“Will you kindly explain to me, Captain, what is the purpose of this disguise?”

“I don’t understand . . .” Darceau began, but his voice was not assured, and it was obvious that he did not expect to deceive Greffe.

“On the contrary, Captain,” Greffe returned, “you understand very well. The masquerade is over, Captain Darceau. You will please follow me.”

Indecisively, Darceau started to pick up his two messkits. Then he set them down again, and turned to follow Greffe. His eyes moved slowly along the file of men behind him; and when they met mine, I saw in them an expression I could not mistake.

“Good God!” I thought, “he believes that *I* betrayed him!”

As I walked through the grounds towards *Gebäude I*, carrying the brownish liquid which was halfway between soup and ersatz coffee, I racked my brain for some explanation of Darceau's discovery. It was natural that he should have suspected me, I realized. In his place, I would have had the same suspicion.

I came to the conclusion myself that there must be a traitor among us, who had given him away—perhaps some one who had recognized him as I had, or even some one who had overheard us. We had talked in low tones, and I thought we were out of range of the others, but perhaps one of the orderlies had heard a few words.

I faced the terrible prospect of having to live among my comrades in an atmosphere of constant suspicion, believing one of them to be a spy, and not knowing which one of them it might be. I wouldn't dare to talk freely again, I would have to keep my thoughts to myself, for fear that some one who appeared to be a friend might turn out to be the traitor.

It was still early when I reached *Gebäude I*, but I found all the officers fully dressed, shaved, and chatting with one another in small groups in the corridor. They had been informed that Lieutenant Greffe intended to make an early tour of inspection, and they didn't want a German officer to catch them unshaven or not completely attired.

I wanted to tell the Admiral my fears about the traitor in our midst, but I thought it better to wait until he had taken his soup. But before starting to drink it, he asked me himself:

"Do you happen to have come across one of the orderlies named Pierre Janson?"

"You mean Captain Darceau, sir?" I asked.

"Why, how did you know?" the Admiral exclaimed.

"He told me his whole story, sir," I said. "I recognized him from Arras. He was found out, and taken away only a few minutes ago."

And I told him what had happened in detail, including the look of suspicion Darceau had thrown at me.

"I believe myself, sir," I concluded, "that some one among us must have given him away. He turned in his papers on arrival like all of us, and no one suspected him. Overnight, they learned the

truth. Some one must have betrayed him, and I don't see how it could have been any one except one of the orderlies."

The Admiral looked at me with an expression of the gravest concern on his face.

"This is a terrible thing," he said. "I shouldn't have believed that there could be any one among us so abject as to betray one of his fellows to the enemy . . . I don't need to tell you, Lambert, that I have complete confidence in you. I shouldn't have asked you to come with me otherwise. Now, I want you to set to work to clear this thing up. You had better pick a few reliable men—be very careful whom you choose—and report to me at once any clue you think you have found. We can't risk an unknown spy among us."

Promptly at 8 o'clock, Lieutenant Greffe appeared for his round of inspection. The officers had retired into their rooms for breakfast, and he passed down the hall, knocking on each door in turn, which a German sergeant then opened promptly without waiting for an answer.

"*Bon shur, mon jainral*," he pronounced it, as he nodded to each occupant of the rooms. He looked about each room, then inclined his head respectfully, and went on to the next. At 9, when he had finished his tour, the generals were permitted to leave the building and go out into the castle park.

I could see the park through the barred window as I tidied Admiral Beaulieu's minute room. "Park" was a rather grandiloquent name for it. It wasn't much larger than a garden—about 200 yards square, planted with a few trees and bushes, with a bench placed here and there.

The generals and admirals stood about in small groups, or strolled up and down, talking animatedly. Sweeping gestures from some of them seemed to indicate heated arguments. Admiral Beaulieu was standing with Verger and de Rensac away from most of the others, looking over the stone wall which bordered the park down into the valley. From that height it looked like a map spread out before them.

At the opposite corner of the wall I noticed two soldiers in Luft-

waife uniforms, one of them holding a pair of binoculars. A phone protected by a small box was within their reach, and I judged this height was used as an observation point. The generals strolling up and down, although they didn't appear to see the two soldiers, always avoided approaching too near them.

As soon as I had finished tidying the Admiral's room, I returned to the orderlies' section of the fort, and hunted up Renier and Gaston. The former I had known well at the Northern Naval Command, and Gaston was an old friend of his from Paris. I was sure of both of them.

I led them aside, out of earshot of all the others, and told them the story of Darceau, and why I was convinced that some one had betrayed him. They agreed also that the deception could hardly have been revealed in any other way, and thought it quite as important as I did that the traitor should be discovered.

"If we find out who the rat is," Renier said grimly, "he won't die of old age."

To begin with, we decided to test our fellows systematically, one by one, by making casual references to the Darceau affair, in the hope of betraying them into some telltale reaction. We would be alert also for exceptional inquisitiveness in any of the orderlies, which might seem to be motivated by the desire to draw others out. If we discovered a few possibly suspicious persons among us, we thought that then we could set a trap by planting with one of them at a time a false bit of information which the Germans would act on publicly, thus pointing out to us which of our suspects was passing on news to them.

I counted particularly on Renier. A miller in civilian life, he was a shrewd fellow, and I thought if any one could trip up a spy, he would be the one to do it.

VIII

Suspicion

WHEN I brought Admiral Beaulieu his lunch at noon the same day, I realized at once that he had something important in mind. He was imperturbable on the surface, as always, but I knew him too well not to recognize the signs of preoccupation with some daring project. He was pacing back and forth in his narrow room, something he rarely did. In fact, I didn't recall having seen him act in that fashion since the first bad news started coming in at Dunkirk.

When I entered, the Admiral stopped, and motioned to me to shut the door.

"Lambert," he said, "you know already from your talk with Captain Darceau that General de Rensac had started to think of escape even before he got here. General Verger feels the same way about it—and I certainly shouldn't want to be left out of it, if there's any way for us to make it. . . . Well, I think there is. We did a little poking around today, and we seem to have found the answer."

He led me over to the window.

"You see where the wall turns there, masked by some trees, at the opposite end of the park from the Luftwaffe spotters?" he asked. "Well, just behind those trees—you can't see the exact spot from here, but no matter—there's a straight drop of only about 35 feet down to a ledge from which there seems to be a sort of rough path which could be followed down into the valley. It's on the side of the rock the Luftwaffe men can't see, and it might even be possible to get away in daylight, which would of course be easier as far as getting down the mountain is concerned. However, we wouldn't mind risking it at night.

"Now one thing is certain: If we are going to try to escape, the

sooner we do it, the better. The chances are that the Germans haven't organized patrols in this region yet, and so, once out of Königstein, getting across country ought to be comparatively simple. A little later, they'll probably have the whole region around the mountain covered by regular patrols.

"But we need one thing we can't seem to locate anywhere in our part of the castle—that's a good strong rope, at least 35 yards long, and preferably twice that, so we can double it and pull it down after us, in case we need it for the descent. Do you think there's any place where you could get us the rope?"

"I think I can," I said. "There are clotheslines just behind the canteen. They look strong enough. It's wash day today, so all I have to do is wash something, and I can go over to the clotheslines without arousing any suspicions."

"*Très bien*, Lambert," the Admiral said. "I depend on you. But be extremely careful. Don't let your traitor, whoever he may be, suspect anything. We don't want any repetition of the Darceau leak."

As soon as I had returned to my quarters, I washed an undershirt and went over to the clotheslines. No one was watching, and it would have been a simple matter for me to have taken one of them—but I discovered the minute I touched one of the ropes that it wouldn't serve. It was made of some ersatz substance, probably paper, strong enough to hold a few shirts, but certainly not capable of supporting a man's weight. I returned, disappointed, without my rope.

I had intended, out of precaution, to manage this myself, without telling any one at all; but that was when I had thought the clothesline would solve my problem. Now I found I needed help. I knew of no other place where I might get a rope, but I thought Renier or Gaston might.

It was a warm day, and most of our comrades were enjoying the open air in front of our casemate. There was a sort of outdoor asphalt-paved corridor before it, about 200 feet long by 10 wide, with sentinels posted at both ends. It was surrounded by a low wall, which would have made an excellent bench, but for some reason we were not allowed to sit on the wall, only on the ground. Most of my comrades therefore were sprawled on the asphalt, Gaston and Renier with them. I signaled to them to follow me, and we went into

the dormitory and sat on my bed, where we would be alone. There I explained to them my need for a strong rope, at least 35 feet long, and preferably 70.

"A rope? Nothing easier!" Renier said. "I was working in the kitchen today, and I looked into the storeroom there. It's wide open—nothing to stop any one from going in. Well, I saw a heap of mountain climbing equipment in one corner, including several coils of good stout rope—just what you need."

"Wonderful!" I said. "That solves our problem."

"But how do we sneak it out?" Gaston asked.

"Leave it to me," Renier said. "I'll find an excuse for puttering around the kitchen, and I'll be surprised if I don't manage to get away with a length of rope hidden under my tunic. I'll do it this afternoon, if I can."

We were called from the dormitory by a summons to all the orderlies to assemble, and we were marched over to the commander's office to hear a lecture from Lieutenant Greffe in which he tried to convince us that the Germans were good friends of the French, and had only made war on us to save us from Communism. Then we were lined up in single file, photographed in profile and full face, and finger-printed.

When this process was finished, the photographer offered to take a group picture of us which we could send home, for 30 pfennigs a print, which the prison office would disburse for us out of our pay. Most of my comrades hurried off to shave and clean themselves up to appear to best advantage in the picture.

I was struck at once with the idea that the Germans really wanted to get this picture for propaganda purposes. I talked to some of the others, pointing out what use the Nazis might make of a group picture of French prisoners, fixed up to look their best, happy and contented, but they seemed to think that I was bringing up imaginary objections. They were already enjoying in anticipation the act of writing *Bons baisers* on a copy of the photograph and sending it off to their wives or sweethearts.

"Don't discourage them," Renier whispered to me. "It's a good diversion. While they're posing, I'm off to get your rope."

I stayed behind and watched my comrades pose obediently as the German photographer commanded, "*Souriez!*" They all smiled radiantly. I kept out of the picture myself.

Renier was back sooner than I had expected. His expression was curious. He seemed puzzled. I felt at once that he had failed, but I walked over to him nevertheless, and said in a low tone: "Get it?"

He shook his head.

"Come inside," he said. We went back into the dormitory and sat down together.

"There's something funny about this," he said. "The *Feldwebel* was there waiting for me—at least, it looked to me as though he expected me."

"What happened?" I asked.

"I went around to the kitchen," Renier explained. "The coast was clear—nobody around—and I went right towards the store-room. The door was open still, but I couldn't see the rope through the door this time, so I entered. The *Feldwebel* was standing just behind the door. He stepped forward and asked me what I wanted. I said, nothing, that I'd just looked in out of curiosity. He told me less curiosity would be more healthy. . . . It certainly seemed as if he were waiting for me . . . but how could he know? There wasn't any one in here except us three. We *couldn't* have been overheard. . . . How sure are you of Gaston?"

"Just as sure as I am of you or myself," I said. "It couldn't have been he. Besides why should the *Feldwebel* have been waiting for you? If they had known, they'd simply take the rope away, or lock the store-room, wouldn't they? There wouldn't be any point in his lying in wait. It must have been just an unfortunate coincidence."

"But he seemed to be hiding there," Renier said, obstinately. "Perhaps he wanted to see who would come for the rope. He pushed me right out towards the light to get a good look at me."

"That doesn't hold water either," I said. "If Gaston, or any one else, had tipped them off, he could have told them who was involved at the same time. It must have been just bad luck."

Renier shook his head slowly.

"I'm sure he was waiting," he repeated.

When I took the Admiral's supper to him that night, I still had no assurance that I could get him any rope. But it was unnecessary for me to report to him on that situation.

As I entered his room, I saw that he was standing with his back to the door, looking out of the window into the park. Without turning, he said:

"Come here, Lambert. See what the Germans are doing."

I joined him at the window and looked down into the garden.

"The devils!" I exclaimed, involuntarily.

Four German soldiers were at work. Part of what they were doing was masked by the trees, but it was easy enough to see that they were erecting a high barbed-wire barrier, impossible to pass, at exactly the point where the Admiral and the two generals had seen a possibility for escape. I noticed also that the post of the Luftwaffe spotters had been moved. It was now so placed that they could see both sides of the rock that plunged down from the garden.

The Admiral spoke quietly, but there was a grave undertone in his voice which troubled me:

"Lambert, whom did you tell about this plan?"

"Only the orderlies of Admiral Level and General Verger, Renier and Gaston. But I'm as sure of them as I am of myself."

The Admiral looked into my eyes.

"If you three were the only ones who knew," he said slowly, "there is only one explanation: one of you three is a traitor."

"But Admiral, you can't believe that I . . ."

"No, Lambert, I can't believe it. You were with me at Dunkirk. You escaped with me to England. You returned with me to France. You were taken with me at Tourlaville. I have always trusted you, and you have always been worthy of my trust. I still trust you. I am sure *you* could not have betrayed me. . . . But you have not been careful enough. Either one of the two men you chose was not worthy of your confidence, or somehow or other you were overheard. You were not careful enough in the case of Captain Darceau,

and unfortunately you were again not careful enough this time. . . . That is all, Lambert. You may go."

I left the Admiral in a bitter mood. I was sure I had not been incautious, yet it was clear that he blamed me for these two disasters. I was deeply devoted to him, and the knowledge that I had displeased him, that I was under a cloud, tormented me gravely.

I walked across the courtyard, my head bent towards the ground, feeling as I had when I was a child, and wanted to cry. But then I could cry, and gain relief; and now I could not. I reviewed my actions, one after the other. I did not see how I could have been responsible, unwittingly, for the second betrayal, even though some one might possibly have overheard me the first time.

I began to wonder if the Admiral couldn't be right—if perhaps it wasn't true that one of my two comrades was the traitor. It must be Gaston, then—Renier had suspected him. But, no! Not necessarily. The only evidence I had that Renier's own story was true was what he had told me himself.

I must watch both of them, I told myself. I wouldn't say anything to them, to reveal my suspicions and warn them; but I would keep close watch on both. Perhaps I would surprise one or the other talking to the Germans. Or perhaps one of them would give himself away by an unguarded remark.

But at this moment, my two comrades appeared, walking side by side towards me; and, in my nervous torment, I lost control of myself completely. I rushed towards them, caught both of them by the tunic, and, shaking them violently, I shouted:

"Which of you two has sold himself to the Germans? I don't need that rope any more, you dirty spies! You can hang yourselves with that rope!"

It was an idiotic way to act; but I was out of my mind with rage. I had sprung at them without any idea of what I was going to do. I was as shocked and astounded to find myself carrying on like a madman as they must have been.

They realized that I was not myself. Neither of them attempted any defense. They simply stared at me, with surprise and pity in their eyes; as I let go of their tunics, and hurried away.

IX

Poisoned Air

I DID NOT sleep well that night. At 7 o'clock, the heavy iron doors slammed behind us, and I was locked into the dormitory, shut up with my fellows, one of whom I knew must be a traitor. I was sharing the same room with him, breathing the same air, yet I did not know which one he was—only that he must be one of the thirteen others, that he might be one of my two best friends.

I avoided meeting the eyes of Gaston and Renier, and they seemed to be avoiding me. I didn't want to talk to the others, so I climbed into bed almost at once, closed my eyes and pretended to sleep; but I couldn't. I lay there, my thoughts competing with the noise that filled the room—shouts, laughter, disputes, the triumphant calls of the card-players, engrossed in *belotte* or *manille*, the droning psalm-like prayers of one orderly of Arabic origin, the unharmonious singing of the most popular songs of Maurice Chevalier and Mistinguette, the complaining whines of the one or two weaklings among us, the monotonous tone of voice of one orderly reading a book aloud to some others. . . .

It seemed to me that the various noises continued for hours before every one had crawled into bed, and talk gave way to snores. Every one except myself, it seemed, was able to sleep. From a few I heard an occasional deep sigh, as though in the process of going off to sleep, they were overwhelmed with regret for the past life of peace and plenty. But soon all about me were breathing deeply, and I felt myself alone, deserted, abandoned, in this room which thundered with the noisy sleep of tired men.

For a brief moment, I succumbed to a feeling of self-pity. Where now, I asked myself, is Lambert, the solitary dreamer who loved to

sit for hours over his fishing pole on Sunday, lost in his thoughts, and almost angered if they were disturbed by a bite on his line? Where was Lambert, the ambitious cameraman, who had worked his way up in a few months to chief petty officer in the Navy? Where, even, was Lambert, the man chosen by his Admiral to serve as his orderly, because of the faith he had in him?

Lambert, the individual, was now a cipher, one-fourteenth of an animal colony, like a protozoic community of interdependent cells, indistinguishable from his fellows. But there was one among us who was different.

In this compact mass of human beings, who lived and moved together as though all of them composed only one human being, there was a traitor. In our cellular community, this one cell was the cancer that could discharge its poison among us all, and destroy our common health. And it was up to me to search out that traitor and end his power for evil.

It was up to me because it was on me that Admiral Beaulieu had bent his doubting glance. The look I had seen in his eyes forced me to find the guilty person, to clear myself. For, although his words had expressed his continued trust in my good intentions, at least, the tone of his voice and his expression had told me that he was no longer sure of me.

It was the remembrance of those two things which kept me awake until we were routed out at dawn for our daily drill.

Suspicion spread through the camp like a poison. Several weeks passed after the unveiling of Captain Darceau and the erection of the barrier, and I still had no idea who the Judas was who had given those secrets away. And by now, I was not alone in knowing there was a traitor. We all knew it. Every one suspected his neighbor. No one of us dared to talk frankly before the others. Constantly, before every one of us, there rose the thought, "Perhaps this man to whom I am talking now is the one who betrayed us."

The most innocent remarks became grounds for suspicion. Every one was on the defensive for himself, aggressive with regard to any one else. That made truculence and defiance more common, and provided more food for suspicion to feed upon. Quarrels were fre-

quent, restrained hostility the common attitude. Our common life was rapidly becoming completely insupportable.

I no longer spoke to Gaston and Renier, nor they to me. We had been seen, and my shouting overheard, from a distance the day I had flung myself at them, and the story of what it was all about had gotten through the camp. One or two other incidents occurred which made it plain that intimate conversations among us were known to the Germans. To my horror, many of my comrades began to look askance at me. Not only was I connected with both the Darceau and the escape leaks, but one of the orderlies had confided to me, just before the atmosphere of suspicion became general, that he had hidden 500 francs in the lining of his tunic instead of turning it over to the Germans when he arrived. The next day he was called into the commander's office, searched, and the money taken from him.

The suspicion which I knew many of my comrades directed towards me wore upon me so bitterly that several times I was tempted to request transfer to an ordinary prison camp. What prevented me, above all, was the necessity, the absolute necessity, of proving to Admiral Beaulieu that it was not I who had betrayed him. I felt the unspoken suspicion every time I saw him; and though it depressed me more than the attitude of some of my own comrades, its effect on me was to determine me that I must stay and see this thing through. Some day the truth would come out, and then I would be exonerated, and the Admiral would grant me once more the confidence he had manifested in me hitherto.

It was the lack of this confidence which was almost the only sign of his changed attitude towards me, aside from some almost imperceptible changes of manner, which I might, perhaps, have imagined or exaggerated. I had been accustomed to hearing him confide his most intimate thoughts to me. He kept nothing back in the turmoil of the tragic days of Dunkirk. In the last few days of our resistance, he expressed to me quite frankly his disagreement with the orders of the High Command, which he considered suicidal. He had accustomed me to consider him more as a friend and counselor than as a superior officer. Now he was that, the superior officer, and nothing more.

He remained scrupulously polite and courteous, as always. He never spoke sharply to me, but his remarks were confined to routine matters. Several times I looked up from my work to find his eyes fixed on me, in a searching, puzzled gaze. I felt that he suffered under the doubt he could not banish also, that he fought against accepting the idea that I was the traitor, but that he dared not act as if he were sure it was not true. Like the rest of us, he also had become cautious and distrustful.

The suspicion which had poisoned relations among the orderlies extended also to the relations between the orderlies and their officers. The generals had, of course, been informed of the two incidents which had occurred, and none of them was too sure that his own helper might not have been the guilty person—or even, perhaps, that there was no leak among themselves. The general nervousness and irritation sometimes took petulant and childish forms, with the officers insisting on an exaggerated deference from the orderlies which had not been customary before, and the orderlies responding with an unwillingness to serve, which they were able to display safely in any number of petty ways. And, naturally, the longer this attitude persisted, the wider grew the gap between the officers and the enlisted men, and the deeper the resentments which divided them.

In the evening, now, the conversation in the casemate was mostly made up of complaints against the officers—one of the few subjects on which the orderlies now dared to express themselves before their fellows. Hardly had the iron doors clanged shut than the *rouspe-tance*—the grumbling—would begin.

"I had a run-in with old Gold-Stripes today," one orderly started on one such night. "He thinks his cell ought to shine like the bridge of the cruiser he used to command—once upon a time. I do what I can, but I'm damned if I'm going to scrub the floor every day. A fine idea! Put a polish on a German building to amuse a French prisoner! . . . And get a load of this: he thinks I ought to wait on him at table, as if he were in the admiral's mess—in dress uniform and white gloves, no less! I let him know I wasn't going in for that. 'To begin with, Admiral,' I says, 'to begin with, where do I get the white gloves?'"

"I don't know what's come over my general," another orderly said, shaking his head slowly. "Damned if I do. This morning I was making him some toast, and I forgot about it—burned six pieces—but to a crisp! You shoulda heard the bawlin' out I got. Couldn't a been worse if I'd stuck him wid a bayonet. . . . Well, after all, it was my fault. So I went and got my piece a bread for him. He wouldn't take it—wouldn't even take half of it. And I thought he was going to break down and cry on my shoulder. Whadaya suppose makes him blow hot and cold like that, huh?"

Gaston broke in to contribute his mite.

"General Tellier's on the war path today," he said. "Look out for him. I was coming from the fountain with two pails of water in my hands, and I passed him. I didn't salute, of course. How could I? Well, he stopped me.

"'Didn't any one ever tell you to salute a general, *mon ami*?' he asked. Polite enough, but cold as steel.

"'*Pardon, mon général*,' I said, 'I've passed you three times this morning. I saluted you before, but I thought that would be sufficient, and as I had my hands full . . .'

"'Never mind what you thought,' he snapped back, without letting me finish. 'You're not supposed to think. Just remember,' he says, 'you salute a general every time you meet him, and I don't want to have to tell you again. You may go now. *Rompez!*'

"But I got even with him," Gaston concluded with relish. "He was sitting down in front of the canteen, so I passed six times. I saluted him six times, and every time he had to return the salute. How could he call me on that after just telling me to salute whenever I saw him?"

The others roared with laughter, and a new series of stories on how the orderlies had managed to annoy their officers got under way.

X

Relief

IT WAS ON August 17 that the mystery of the traitor was solved. I remember the date clearly, for the relief it brought was tremendous and instantaneous. And I had the good luck to make the discovery which cleared me and restored me in the good graces of the Admiral.

I had brought his morning drink to Admiral Beaulieu as usual. As always, I could feel his piercing gaze upon me, even when I was not looking at him. He stood pensively before the window, buttoning his tunic slowly, as though he could not bring himself to the hypocrisy of uttering a friendly word which he didn't really feel.

"Do you wish anything else, Admiral?" I asked.

"No, Lambert. Thank you."

But as I turned to leave the room, one of the buttons fell from his tunic and rolled under the bed. A button was a valuable object in Germany, not easy to replace. I hurriedly got on my hands and knees and groped under the bed—it couldn't be moved out, for it was fastened to the floor, which had annoyed me daily as I made it. I finally found the button—and something else as well.

The Admiral noticed the expression on my face as I rose to my feet.

"What's the matter with you, Lambert?" he asked sharply.

I put a finger to my lips. He looked at me as though he thought I had lost my mind.

There was a pad of paper and a pencil on the table. I hastily wrote a few words on it and handed it to the Admiral. I had written:

"Careful—there is a microphone under the bed, against the wall."

I suppose I am one of the few persons in the world who has ever

seen a full admiral crawl under a bed. When he emerged, he said nothing, simply nodded confirmation to me.

"The coffee is cold," he said. "In the future, try to get it to me while it's still hot."

I knew his sentence had been spoken for the benefit of the microphone. I answered in kind:

"I'm sorry, sir. I'll do my best."

Thé Admiral motioned me to come out into the corridor with him. He inspected the walls carefully as we moved along, and finally selected a spot where walls and floor were bare, and there seemed no possibility of any hidden sound detectors.

"Damn those Germans with their filthy methods," he broke out vigorously. "Lambert, I owe you an apology for having accused you of being careless. I owe you one even more for having had doubts about you. I should have known you better. . . . This makes it all quite plain. I was the one who told the Germans about our plan for escape myself. They heard every word I said to you, of course. As for Darceau, that must have come from your talk with him—that means there are microphones in your quarters, too. Better have a good look around, and warn the others—and if you have any more important conversations, hold them out of doors. . . . Jove, it's lucky you discovered that. A little more of this atmosphere, and we'd all have been at one another's throats!"

He paused a moment, and then added:

"I'm particularly happy to know that, after all, we were wrong in believing there was a traitor among us."

I hurried back to the orderlies' quarters, walking on air. As I approached, I saw Renier and Gaston talking together, among the others. I ran up to them, radiant, and called their names. They turned towards me, startled to see me suddenly so friendly again.

"Renier! Gaston! *Mes bons amis!*" I babbled. "There are no traitors among us! It was all a mistake—no, not a mistake—it was a trick of those devilish Boches!"

And in a few sentences I told them about the discovery of the microphone.

"So, you see," I concluded, "that was how they learned about Darceau, and about the money Jean had hidden. And Renier—

you were right. The *Feldwebel* was waiting for you to come for the rope. He must have wanted to see whose voice he had heard. It's all clear now!"

And then suddenly I remembered how I had accused my friends, and I began stammering shame-faced apologies.

"Forget it!" Gaston cried, slapping me on the back heartily. "We know how you felt. We suspected you too, you know. . . . But that's all behind us, now. How about a little microphone hunt?"

A few of us went into the casemate, and, talking casually, for the benefit of the microphones we expected to find, we made our search. They were easy to find once we knew what we were looking for; for our beds too were fastened to the floor, and I reasoned that, as in the case of the Admiral's bed, they were fixed to prevent our moving them and revealing the microphones. So we looked under the beds, and, sure enough, we found a microphone under every second bed, close to the wall, hardly concealed by being sunk into a little depression in the floor.

We went outside again and reported to our comrades. And then and there we planned the first skirmish of what we called later "the war of the microphones." We decided that hereafter the Germans would hear nothing but insults and other disagreeable remarks through their spy system. We would attack everything German, from their undrinkable "coffee" to their government, and emphasize how much better everything was in France. We decided we could use our new-found knowledge to good effect, also. For instance, we would try to get out of the 5 o'clock drill period by discussing at great length the stupidity of the Germans in teaching us their excellent military technique, which we would be able to take back to France with us, and impart to the French army which some day would avenge our defeat.

At noon, when I took the Admiral his lunch, he told me that the officers had also gone on a microphone hunt, and had found their quarters filled with them. Not only were there microphones in every room, but they were also placed at every point where it was likely that conversations might be held. The spot Admiral Beaulieu had

picked to speak to me that morning was almost the only one out of range of one of the secret listening devices. One was placed at the end of the corridor, under the window casing. Another was hidden under the stairs, in case any one paused to talk there. A third was behind the bulletin board on which the orders of the prison commander were posted—a strategic spot to pick up adverse comment. And there were microphones in the transoms above every door.

All this the Admiral told me in the part of the corridor which had been determined to be safe. Before returning to his room, I asked him if he would be kind enough to speak to General de Rensac, and point out to him that the discovery of the microphones cleared me of the suspicion of having had anything to do with Captain Darceau's arrest. I didn't imagine that there would be any way in which he could communicate with Darceau, who had been removed to an ordinary officers' camp, but I did want to make sure that some day he would learn the truth. I couldn't bear to think that he might still be blaming me.

After the Admiral had eaten his lunch and had gone out into the garden, I set to work as usual to tidy up his room, occasionally glancing out of the window at the officers chatting below, when suddenly I was struck by an idea which had not occurred to me before. If microphones had been hidden in the rooms and corridors, why not in the garden also? They might easily have been placed under the benches, or in the trees.

I was in agony as the thought that the officers might be revealing, even as I watched them, the discovery of the microphones, which I thought it was important for us that the Germans should not know. For as long as they believed that they had this means of spying on us, they would find it unnecessary to resort to others; and we, for our part, might be able to utilize our knowledge and their ignorance to set them off on some false trails. For another attempt at escape, the presence of the microphones might even prove a help, not a hindrance.

I couldn't think of any way to warn them. Orderlies were not permitted in the garden except on Sundays between two and three.

I decided to wait until one of the officers came back to the building, and then warn him, in the hopes he would be able to tell the others before anything had been given away. I dawdled about my work, remaining in the Admiral's room after all the other orderlies had left the building, keeping close watch on the gesticulating generals, who seemed to be unsuspectingly talking their heads off, waiting for one of them to leave the group.

But it was a whole hour before General de Rensac started out of the garden, in the direction of *Gebäude* I. I hurried out in order to intercept him in the courtyard, where I judged it would be safe to talk.

"*Mon général,*" I saluted him, "Admiral Beaulieu has no doubt spoken to you for me?"

"You're the one who talked to Darceau, I take it?" he said. "Yes, I know all about it. It's too bad, but I'm afraid he'll have to go on thinking for a while that a Frenchman betrayed him. There doesn't seem to be any way to tell him the truth just now. But don't worry. I shan't forget. I'll see to it that he knows, even if it has to wait until we all get out—whenever that is. . . . And by the way—we all owe you a debt of gratitude for discovering those microphones."

"*Voilà, mon général,*" I said, "that's what I really wanted to speak to you about. It only occurred to me after the Admiral had gone out—perhaps they have installed microphones in the garden, too. In case you hadn't thought of that . . ."

"Oh, we thought of it," the general laughed, "and they're there all right—plenty of them. We've been giving the Germans an earful all afternoon. General Champion has been delivering a sort of lecture on German military errors—quite a brilliant job. He described all the battles the Germans have lost from Charlemagne through 1918. Then I took a turn, and informed any one who was listening that Königstein had seen French generals before, because Napoleon's conquering troops had made their headquarters here in 1813, and one of his officers, General Vandam, had started out for Vienna from Königstein. I doubt if they enjoyed this morning's listening."

So the generals, as well as the orderlies, had joined the war of the microphones! The amusement all of us got out of this little game

(which we took care not to overdo, to arouse no suspicions) helped to erase the memory of the days of tension and distrust. Once again we were united against the enemy, not disunited against each other. It seemed to me that we breathed a clearer air.

XI

Trial in Prison

It was bad enough that the Germans had been able to listen to the private conversations of the generals before the microphones were discovered. What was much worse was that they had been able to take down a record of the proceedings of the Committee of Rehabilitation, a sort of trial board before which every general and admiral was called upon to appear to justify the circumstances in which he was taken prisoner. The purpose was to register the facts while they were fresh in every one's mind, for future use in the investigations which it was expected would follow the war.

General Verger had been elected chairman of the committee. It was due to that fact that I knew something of what had gone on, for though no orderlies were present at its sessions, he had later dictated minutes of the proceedings to an orderly who was a stenographer, and he, in turn, had confided certain facts about them to me.

Each officer was called in turn to testify, General Verger himself setting the example by stating his case first. Believing themselves safe from eavesdropping, the generals had discussed the most secret details of the lost campaign, and the Germans no doubt had amassed some very valuable data on the manner in which the French Army operated.

They had also had the pleasure of hearing some of the sessions develop into violent disputes among the generals, resulting from the attempt of each of them to absolve himself of any responsibility for the defeat. Thus one would complain that he had been unable to launch an attack at a given moment because the troops on his flank had failed to carry out their part of the manœuvre—and as the general commanding those troops would also be present, an argument

would break out about who was really at fault. The second general, perhaps, would blame the insufficient resources put at his disposition for his own difficulties—whereupon the staff officer responsible for the allotment of effectives would enter heatedly into the controversy—and so forth and so on. It couldn't have been a very pretty spectacle, and the idea that the Germans had heard it all was extremely annoying.

The fact that recurred again and again in these hearings, the orderly told me, was that in almost every case, when a dispute about failure at a particular point had finally been boiled down to ultimate responsibilities, it was discovered that some inexplicable order of retreat, apparently quite unjustified by the situation, was behind it.

"One would think," he said to me, "that some one in headquarters was purposely pulling troops out of the line here and there at exactly the wrong moments, so fatally did those orders result. *Tiens!* Look at this piece of transcript which I am typing today."

I read the page he handed me. It began with a question from General Verger:

"You say then, general, that on the 26th you were moving to the left flank of the Nth Army? How did it happen that you were not already at X?"

"I had received an order to retreat."

"An order to retreat? But your position on the banks of the XX seems to have been unassailable!"

"That was my opinion also, general. But my orders allowed me no discretion. Hardly had we taken up our positions than we were ordered to vacate them."

And then the record noted, in parentheses, the remark of another general, who had growled: "It was the same for me. I had to get out before the Boche—pardon, the German—tanks had even reached my sector."

"It looks bad to me," the stenographer concluded. "The testimony is all like that. I can't believe it—and yet it seems that those fatal orders must have been given deliberately. Do you suppose it's possible that we were simply sold out, betrayed—and by some of our own staff officers?"

I told him I thought the idea fantastic; but it troubled me.

The sessions of the Committee of Rehabilitation were cancelled after the microphones were discovered. They couldn't very well be held outdoors, and there was no other safe spot. But it was a case of locking the stable door after the horse had been stolen. There were few secrets left to keep from the Germans. They had already learned everything likely to be useful to them.

If microphones were hidden in the rooms, in the casemate and in the garden, weren't there some in the canteen also?

The canteen was the favorite meeting place of the generals. It was a sort of combination bazaar and café. It sold products of many kinds, all of them ersatz—ersatz shaving lotion, ersatz vinegar, ersatz soap, handkerchiefs made of paper, and sausages made of sawdust. The owner, a German in civilian clothes, who never took off his Tyrolean hat, indoors or out, warm weather or cold, charged prices for these miserable substitutes for honest merchandise that would have been high in the smartest shopping districts of Paris or London, before the war.

Nevertheless, the officers went to the canteen regularly, partly to see if anything new had been added to the restricted stock on sale, partly because there was nowhere else to go, but chiefly because it was the one place where they could sit about a table with, when they were lucky, a glass of beer or a cup of imitation coffee, and talk among themselves at the hours when they were not admitted to the garden.

They had been accustomed to exchanging ideas freely here, but now they dared no longer say anything important to one another. In the presence of the canteen owner, and occasionally of some of the German officers as well, they were unable to carry on a hunt for microphones in the canteen. They simply assumed their presence, and kept their conversation innocuous.

The Germans were no longer getting any information through their listening post. Whether they suspected why or not, we, of course, had no means of knowing. But they did not intend to be left without any means of spying on us. It was to be expected that when the microphones failed to serve, they would try other methods. And they did.

XII

Schism

IT WAS some time after the discovery of the microphones had been made that Renier, one day, was called to the commander's office. The summons came in the evening, after we had been shut up for the night, so there was no chance of speaking to him out of range of the listening devices when he reappeared.

Nevertheless, he seemed so upset when he returned that I asked him what had happened. He waved towards the nearest microphone significantly, and answered:

"Nothing special. Just a routine check. I imagine they intend to question every one sooner or later."

I understood at once that he actually had something to report too important to talk about where we would be overheard, and at the first opportunity the next morning I got together with him in the courtyard.

He had been received by Lieutenant Greffe, who treated him with the greatest politeness, invited him to sit down, and offered him a cigarette, a cup of real coffee and a glass of brandy. "Good French brandy it was, too," Renier said. "Must have been some of the stuff they stole from us."

Then Greffe launched into a long talk about the benevolent intentions of the Germans towards France. After the war, he said, Germany wanted nothing more than that the peace should be durable, and not disturbed by future wars; and they realized that this was only possible if they could remain on good terms with the French—which, he said, was their most sincere desire.

"Unfortunately," Greffe went on, studying Renier's expression closely as he talked, "I fear we must expect that many of your leaders

will be bitter, revengeful, after the war. It is natural, and we understand it, but it will not contribute to the lasting peace which France and Germany alike will need in order to be able to bind up their wounds and enjoy again the blessings of normal existence. What we want to do now, is to work with those among you who are capable of understanding this, and who, with the best interests of their country at heart, will aid us to establish the mutual comprehension which will be so necessary for us both.

"Now you orderlies see your officers when they are most relaxed, when they are most themselves, when they are most likely, casually, to reveal their inmost thoughts. An intelligent fellow like yourself could easily determine which of the generals here are still unreconciled, still hostile to us, still anxious to fight again; or which ones would understand the necessity of cooperating with us to safeguard the future peace of the world; or—and this is very important, Herr Renier—which of them are for the British and which are against them. For after all, you know, the real enemy of both of our countries is the British. They are the ones who want to keep us down, and who set us to fighting each other, so that we will not unite and become strong enough to challenge the British Empire. I do not know whether you agree or not, but I assure you that Britain is much more the enemy of France than Germany is. Britain thinks only of her own future welfare, but we are thinking of the future of France, which we want to see a partner with us in building the New Europe.

"How about it, Renier? Would you just keep your eyes and ears open, and let me know which of the generals, in your judgment, might be ready to cooperate with us, for the good of France and of the cause of world peace, you understand, quite as much as for the sake of Germany? And, of course, we would want to know who are the irreconcilables, the bitter-enders, so that we won't waste any time on them."

In spite of the studiously innocent appearance Greffe gave to his proposal that Renier should spy for him, the orderly saw through it. He let Greffe say everything he had to say, and then answered simply:

"I'm sorry, Lieutenant, but I really cannot undertake to do that."

Greffé's attitude changed in a second. He sprang up from his chair, and thumped his fist on the table.

"It is so stupid of you not to understand!" he cried. "It is for your own good. I hoped you would realize that. We want to be friends with you Frenchmen. We do not want to use harsh measures. But we cannot let idiotic individual scruples prevent us from completing a great task which is more important than what happens to any one person—to you, for instance, Monsieur Renier, or to your father, who lives, I believe, in Brest?"

"My father? What has he to do with this?" Renier asked.

"We have been having trouble in Brest," Greffé said. "Much trouble, with stubborn fellows like yourself, who do not realize that we are your friends. We have had to take hostages. We arrested twenty yesterday. One of them happened to be your father. Now, Monsieur Renier, you know as well as I do what danger he is in, with your stupid countrymen still refusing to realize that they are beaten. Hostages are being executed every day. We are forced to shoot them by the actions of the population. We cannot permit rebellion against the authority of the occupying forces. The shooting of hostages is a necessity of war.

"I admit, Monsieur Renier, that the reason I chose to speak to you, among all the orderlies, was that I had learned of the arrest of your father. I said to myself, 'I can offer him proof that we mean it when we say we want to cooperate with the French. If he shows willingness to understand, to work with us as we wish to work with his countrymen, then I can show our good will at once by asking for the release of his father on the grounds that we know he has accepted the situation and that no one in his family, therefore, should have to pay the penalty for the crimes of those who are too stubborn or too stupid to accept it.'

"That was what I told myself. But, Monsieur Renier, if you refuse, with the best will in the world, I cannot ask that any exception should be made in your father's case, unless I can give some reason why it should be done. If you cannot see your way clear to help us, then your father will have to take his chance with the others. If you cooperate, I will have a reason for sending word to Brest that he is to be released."

"What could I do, Lambert?" Renier asked. "It was plain enough, of course, that my father hadn't been arrested by accident, and that Greffe hadn't 'happened' to hear of it immediately, way off here. They must have found him by consulting the records they have on me, and arrested him on purpose to be able to blackmail me. You can think what you want of me, but I couldn't let them kill my father. I promised to do what they wanted. Of course, I'll try to hide as much as I can—but I'll have to tell them something. What can I do?"

He looked at me appealingly, but before I could answer, he hurried on:

"Oh, yes—here is something else you should know. I suppose they told me this as encouragement or consolation. Lieutenant Greffe claims he has already found some men who 'understand,' both among the generals and the orderlies. They are willing, he says, to cooperate with the Germans in the interest of world peace, and will therefore, of course, receive favored treatment. Just what the reward for treason is to be, I don't know."

And he repeated again:

"What could I do, Lambert? What would you have done in my place? I despise myself for having consented—but I would despise myself even more if I had condemned my father to death. Can you see any way out?"

"No," I said slowly, "No, I don't. But I suggest, if you have no objection, that I tell General de Rensac and Admiral Beaulieu about this. The general is having tea with the Admiral this afternoon, and while I'm serving them whatever I can scare up, I'll try to find an opportunity to ask their advice. I'm sure that neither of them is among the generals who may already have decided to collaborate—if Greffe was speaking the truth. And I'm sure that they'll understand that you were trapped. They may be able to suggest a way out. Who knows, it may even be useful to them to have you in contact with the Germans." Renier was a little worried about the idea of confiding in the officers, but I finally persuaded him.

My conversation with Renier had occurred after I had served the Admiral's breakfast. I returned to his room to make the bed, and

clean it up with the thought that he might not yet have gone out, and I could speak to him at once about Renier's case. But he was already gone, so I returned to my original idea of asking both his advice and that of General de Rensac that afternoon.

As I worked in the room, I could not help thinking of Greffe's statement that the Germans had already found friends among the generals, and as I watched them through the window, strolling about in the garden, or standing and sitting in small groups, I tried to guess who among them might have been willing to make friends with the Germans.

I noticed for the first time that the officers seemed to be split up into three large groups, each compounded of the smaller groupings: and that though men might move back and forth freely from one small group to another within the larger divisions, it was rather rare for a general to leave the confines of his own main body. I wondered if these divisions could possibly correspond to political differences of the type indicated by Greffe.

I could see General de Rensac and General Verger sitting on a bench in the center of the garden with 30 or 40 officers clustered loosely about them. If I might judge by the character of these two generals, I figured that this would certainly be a thoroughly non-collaborationist society.

Off in one corner, a smaller number, possibly 15 or 20, seemed to center about Generals Tellier and Bancard. Both of these men were the stiff, arrogant military type, not much liked by the orderlies, and I could very easily imagine them being readier to accept the hand of the Germans than any of the others. Perhaps these, I thought, were the men Greffe had referred to.

But the largest group of all in the diagonally opposite corner of the garden from the Tellier faction—what bond held them together? They were discussing something, in a most animated fashion. What was their conversation about? What were their convictions? They seemed to lose members more easily to one of the other two groups than either of the others did. My best guess was that these men might be the middle-of-the-rovers, or the undecided.

One thing I couldn't fail to note, and that was the stiff politeness with which the officers of the two factions I had marked down as

probable bitter-enders and collaborationists respectively greeted each other. That, in fact, was one of the indications on which I based my guess. They seemed to have determined to show a minimum of warmth to one another, like men of violently different opinions, constrained to hide their mutual dislike by the conventions of a polite society in which they moved.

Apparently even in this enemy prison, even here in Königstein, the officers had brought with them the political disagreements which had contributed to the downfall of France . . . or was the present situation not of political origin at all, but a new schism created by opposite reactions towards the restraint of imprisonment?

XIII

Musical Interlude

I WOULD have had no time to talk to the Admiral about Renier at noon, even if I hadn't decided to wait until teatime, for we were summoned unexpectedly to take part in what we considered a painful ceremony. That did not seem to be the opinion of Lieutenant Greffe, who had ordered that the castle entrance be decorated to celebrate the event—the arrival of the permanent commander of the prison, General Günther.

What annoyed us was that we orderlies had been ordered to take part in the ceremony of welcome. We considered it an impudence that French soldiers should be obliged to line up in close-order drill and stand at attention in honor of an enemy general. So it was for this that we had been obliged to turn out of our beds at five every morning and go through the repugnant German drill—so that we could put on a good review for the General and impress him with Greffe's ability to impose upon us a discipline which would do honor to the Lieutenant's capacity as a commander!

We determined that he would derive no satisfaction from our drilling. If the sergeant had had trouble in our daily drills getting us to keep proper alignment or deliver the stiff Potsdam salute, his earlier difficulties were as nothing to those he had during the reception of General Günther. We obeyed commands in the most slovenly fashion possible, straggling out as we marched into what looked more like a disorderly mob than a body of soldiers, and not once did we get into anything resembling a straight line.

The sergeant stood nearby, biting his lips in a rage, but not daring to say a word to disrupt the ceremony, knowing that nothing would please us better than to score on him by forcing recognition of his

failure to get us to become the automatons he wanted us to be. General Günther also must have realized that we were deliberately showing as much ill will as possible, for while he carefully refrained from comment, which would have been an admission that our insult to him had hit its mark, he was obviously in a towering bad humor.

General Günther, judging from his appearance, was about 60, the typical Prussian officer, even to the monocle affected by his caste. He regarded us with eyes so steely and hostile that a cold shiver ran down my spine. Renier, standing next to me, whispered: "He looks like a tough one, all right. They didn't pick him to pamper us."

Turning aside with a disgusted expression from the unsoldierly spectacle we were providing for him, Günther said to Lieutenant Greffe in German (a language which I understood, though I hadn't let the Germans in Königstein know it):

"And the real prisoners—where are they? The officers, I mean. *Ach*, I understand, I understand. Those proud gentlemen, who still put on airs although they have been soundly beaten by their superiors, did not care to take the trouble to come to meet me. Very well. We will have ample opportunity to meet later. They will have occasion to become acquainted with me."

The tea which I prepared for Admiral Beaulieu and General de Rensac that afternoon was no very palatable beverage. I had made it from dried herbs, bought at the canteen, and with saccharine instead of sugar. The Admiral and the General entered from the garden as I was brewing it on a little alcohol stove, which the Admiral had also obtained at the canteen. I was impatient to tell them about Renier, but I couldn't do so with the microphone under the bed, and I couldn't very well interrupt their conversation the moment they entered to signal that I wanted to speak to them in the hall, in the one safe spot. I resigned myself to waiting until after they had had their "tea."

"So!" said General de Rensac. "We have a new commander! Günther is his name, I understand. I saw him from my window when he arrived."

I was afraid the General might say something more than he would

care to have overheard, and I hastily put my fingers to my lips and pointed under the bed, to remind him of the microphone.

Admiral Beaulieu smiled.

"Oh, General!" he said. "I have a little surprise for you. I know you like music. See what I discovered in the canteen today—a phonograph! It was the only one they had. I bought it at once. Unfortunately, they had only one record—*Ach, du lieber Augustin!* Perhaps they'll be able to get me others later. But let's try this one anyway."

"A very popular song," General de Rensac said. "Most persons don't know it, but Augustin is an actual character, and reputedly the author of the song. I saw a statue of him in Vienna about ten years ago. He's supposed to have been a seventeenth century bagpipe player, whose cheerfulness was only equalled by his fondness for the bottle. The story goes that there was an epidemic of the plague in Vienna, and Augustin, who had collapsed in the street dead drunk on his way home from a lively evening, was scooped up in the street by the scavengers along with the bodies of the dead, and thrown into a ditch with the corpses. When he awoke in the morning, and found himself part of such a horrible heap, he started singing of his mis-haps, in a mood of self-pity. But he survived the episode handily enough. He lived 25 years more, plenty of time to embed his song in the memories of his contemporaries."

"You're quite a musical historian, General!" Beaulieu said. "I didn't know the record was so appropriate when I bought it. We're '*lieber Augustins*' in a death house of sorts ourselves. . . . Well, let's hear what it sounds like."

With a broad grin, he set the phonograph on the floor beside the bed, its soundbox pointed at the microphone. He started it going, and it blared noisily at the sound detector, as the Admiral winked at the General, and said, "While Augustin stays in voice, I think we can talk about as we please, General."

Rensac broke into a roar of laughter.

"That's really good, Admiral, really good!" he exclaimed. "I shouldn't have thought of it. You're a clever fellow, Beaulieu! It takes a seaman to think of something like that."

And for the rest of the General's visit, all the Germans heard out of our microphone was *Ach, du lieber Augustin!* played over and

over, while conversation in the room was, for the first time since the microphones had been discovered, unrestrained.

The Admiral's ruse gave me the opportunity I wanted to report what Renier had told me. During our conversation, General Verger came in, and as I saw no reason why he should not hear the story as well as the other two, I continued my account in his presence. The three officers were visibly impressed with it.

"We may assume," General Verger said, "that Renier is not the only one of the orderlies who has been submitted to pressure of this kind. The Germans are obviously very anxious to know just how our minds are working, and which of us they can persuade to work with them."

Rensac, who had been pondering the matter in silence for some minutes, spoke up to offer this solution:

"Tell Renier that we ourselves will give him information from time to time to pass on to the Germans. He is not to tell them anything else. We will see to it that he gets some authentic information which will prevent them from suspecting that he is double-crossing them, but at the same time will only cover what they know already, or completely unimportant details. That should keep his father out of danger, and he can be assured that the Germans will not be able to profit by anything he tells them."

The phonograph picked this moment to run down, and I hastened to wind it up and start the record again—while the officers filled in the brief pause with a few inconsequential remarks to deceive any listener into thinking that what they had been saying while the record was playing was equally unimportant. Rensac, complaining that it was too hot in the Admiral's room, thanked him for the tea and said that he thought he would return to the garden. When he had left the room, I seized the opportunity to ask a question of General Verger, in the absence of Rensac, who could be peppery on occasion, and whose sudden shifts of temper were rather unpredictable.

"*Mon général*," I said, "Lieutenant Greffe told Renier that there were not only some orderlies, but even a number of generals who have already indicated willingness to collaborate with the Germans. Is that possible?"

Verger frowned.

"I'd rather you didn't repeat that to the other orderlies, Lambert," he said, "though, after all, I suppose it will become apparent in time. Yes, I regret to say that Lieutenant Greffe undoubtedly spoke the truth. There are some among *ces messieurs* who have decided that the Germans are too strong to oppose, that their equipment is too good, and that their industry is unbeatable. They have come to the conclusion that it is better to have a doubtful friend than a tough enemy."

"*Mon général*, could we orderlies be of any assistance in warning you if we detect any signs that certain generals are inclining towards friendliness to the Germans?"

Verger snorted, rather than laughed.

"It's not necessary, Lambert. We know where every one stands. No one seems to think it necessary to hide his views here. We've already split up into three more or less well-defined groups, which hardly speak to one another. Take a look into the garden some day, and see how they avoid fraternizing. It's almost comic."

"I noticed that there were three groups this morning, *mon général*. I guessed that they must represent different ideas."

"Right, Lambert. There are about a fifth of us who feel the same as Admiral Beaulieu, General de Rensac and myself. We are the irreconcilables. For us, the Boche is the enemy and will always be the enemy. We cannot give the hand of friendship to a country which attacked without provocation—and not for the first time, either. Soft words are not going to convince us that Germany has forgotten her mania for permanent conquest.

"There are unfortunately almost as many on the opposite side—those who are ready to bury the hatchet with the Germans. For them, the German victory proves that we were following the wrong path, and Germany the right one. They would like to see the same sort of government from above in France that the Reich has—particularly if they could be the ones to apply it. Most of them are Anglophobes, and agree with the Germans that England is the worst enemy of France. They would be quite willing to see France accept a partnership with Germany—even a junior partnership—and collaborate with her hereafter, in spite of her attack on us.

"That leaves the largest group of the three. You might call them the neutrals, I suppose. I call them the ostriches. They keep their heads buried deep in the sand, occasionally emerging long enough to murmur, '*La France suffit à elle-même*' (France is self-sufficient), and then plunging quickly into the sand again before the falsity of this proposition can be demonstrated to them. They remind me of little boys, whistling when they have to pass the cemetery in the dark.

"The trouble with these men is that they have never been able to think for themselves. They have always had to depend on the orders of those above them in the hierarchy. And until some one whose authority they recognize gives them orders, they are out of the struggle—or think they are. They don't realize that in times like these no one can keep out of the fight.

"That is one of the things for which I reproach Marshal Pétain. He has given an excuse to a majority of French soldiers to lower their standards. Since the highest ranking soldier in France, the man they consider their supreme commander, has abdicated to the enemy, why should they continue to oppose him? For that matter, Pétain has set the example for those who are willing, from fighting the enemy, to turn around and aid him to exploit his victory. At least, we can say this much for the ostriches: they haven't followed him that far—yet."

I wound up the phonograph and set *Ach, du lieber Augustin* going again for what seemed the thousandth time.

General de Rensac looked in after he had refreshed himself with a few turns in the garden.

"I wonder who this man Günther is," he said. "I was talking to some of the others out there, and nobody seems to know him. I've never heard of him myself, though I thought I knew the records of most of the general officers of the German Army. He looks like an old-timer. Ever heard of him, Verger?"

General Verger shook his head. But Admiral Beaulieu spoke up:

"Wait a minute, now. Günther . . . it sounds familiar. It reminds me of something. Now what the devil was it? . . . Lambert! Wasn't it in Bastion 32 that Captain de Pecquot told me that long yarn of

his? You were there. Wasn't the German officer in that story named Günther?"

"Yes," I said hesitantly. "Yes. That sounds right." It was beginning to come back to me vaguely. "It was a name something like that, at least."

"What was that story?" the Admiral said. "You ought to remember as much about it as I do. Help me to recall it. Between the two of us we ought to be able to piece it together again."

The period to which the Admiral referred was the time of Dunkirk. The Northern Naval Command had retreated into Bastion 32. We were under constant bombardment, and were hardly able to leave our shelters, when we were off duty. There was no light, there was little water, and we were living under conditions almost as bad as those which ordinarily come only at the end of a long siege.

It was a confusing period of violent and vivid contrasts. The remnants of retreating armies arrived at the bastion, mingled with generals, diplomats, princes and ministers. These dignitaries abandoned their luxurious cars in the street before embarking for England. Our command headquarters became a sort of hotel. General Weygand, who had just been made commander-in-chief, conferred with Admiral Beaulieu there, after having visited the King of the Belgians, and then took off again under a hail of bombs.

Day by day the pressure grew greater. Our shelter was stoutly constructed. It resisted direct hits from shells and bombs, while within we toiled at the task of embarking the fleeing armies. I will never forget those terrible days and nights when I worked side by side with the Admiral, in the bomb-proof recesses of Bastion 32. It was there in particular that I learned to respect and admire the Admiral. The strain under which he was operating seemed to have no effect on him. At one period, we had worked almost without a break for two days and nights, yet when the pressure eased off and we found ourselves momentarily with nothing ahead of us, the Admiral seemed to feel no need of immediate rest, and proceeded to talk of nonmilitary matters in as relaxed a fashion as if he were in his own home, in time of peace.

Half an hour had passed without an air raid—quite a respite in

those days—and the Admiral said jokingly: “It’s too quiet in here. It makes me nervous. I’m not used to it. Can’t you scare us up a few more bombers?”

“I think we can confidently expect them shortly, Admiral,” I predicted.

“Well, while we’re waiting, I think I’ll read a little for a change,” the Admiral said. “Pass me that volume of Voltaire, will you, Lambert?”

I handed it across the table.

“Ever read Voltaire, Lambert?” the Admiral asked. “Excellent writing. Excellent thinking, too, of course. Possibly not perfect reading for military schools, though.”

“I’ve read Voltaire, of course,” I said. “But not very recently. Perhaps not since I left school.”

“That’s a pity, Lambert,” the Admiral said. “The trouble with reading great books in school is that you neglect to re-read them later. Now take Voltaire, for instance—”

The raiders returned, but the Admiral continued calmly to discuss Voltaire, to the accompaniment of the crashes outside.

Captain de Pecquot came in. The long friendship of his family with the Admiral was responsible for the intimacy between the two men, and when the Admiral was alone, or simply with myself, there was no formality between them.

“Not working and not resting either!” Pecquot exclaimed. “Decidedly, Lambert, you aren’t taking good care of him. Why don’t you make him take a bite to eat and get a nap while he can?”

“I’m too tired to sleep,” the Admiral said. “I’m not like you, you know. I can’t break off in the middle of everything and go right off to sleep. I need a little tapering off first. I was planning to get it by reading a bit, but these confounded candles are too hard on the eyes. How about entertaining me a bit with the latest report on your unbelievably varied love life?”

“If you think that I manage to attend to that department in this atmosphere,” Pecquot said, “you do me too much credit. I haven’t so much as thought about women since the invasion.”

“You’d think about women in front of a firing squad,” the Admiral said. “You won’t make me believe that one.”

"Well, that was a little figurative," Pecquot said. "As a matter of fact, all this business did start me thinking about a young lady I met two or three years ago—what I thought was the beginning of a romance that stopped almost before it began (much to my annoyance, you can be sure). I was wondering what had become of her because she's on the other side now—a German. Funny to think of a woman you flirted with being one of the enemy now. She wasn't really German, as a matter of fact. She was Swiss, married to a German. He was a German Army officer, too, to make it worse. I'm sure she was too damned good for him."

"Well, tell us about it," the Admiral said. "Maybe that will put me to sleep."

So Pecquot told us his story. The Admiral and I managed to reconstruct it for the two generals, and as its details came back to me, I became positive that Beaulieu had remembered correctly. The name of the German officer *was* Günther. But one detail didn't fit.

"I'm sure of it now, Admiral," I said. "That was the name all right. But he wasn't a general. He was Colonel Günther."

"It could still be the same," General de Rensac said. "Remember what Clemenceau said: 'Every general has the shortcoming of having previously been a colonel.' That was a few years ago. There could easily have been a promotion in the meantime—especially during a war. That may be our man."

At this date, I don't recall exactly how much of Pecquot's story we succeeded in telling the generals. But from Pecquot since, I have heard it all in greater detail. And as it has a bearing on some of the facts I will have to set down later, I will tell it all here.

XIV

Maria

IT WAS two or three years before the war. Pecquot, who had taken time off from his law practice for a refresher period as a reserve captain in the aviation, had had the bad luck to have a plane accident. He had chosen to recuperate in the colorful surroundings of Italy's Lake Como. His good looks were accompanied by a lively appreciation of the same quality in the other sex, and he rarely remained many days in a new place without striking up a friendship with some attractive young lady. Como was no exception.

The girl who took Pecquot's eye there was a young woman who was both beautiful and distinguished. The first time she appeared in the hotel dining room, Pecquot studied her carefully from his table, and decided that she would be a pleasant companion. He inquired discreetly who she was, and was told, by the head waiter, that her name was Günther, and that though she was married to a German, she was Swiss by birth. Her husband, the head waiter added, was not with her.

Pecquot managed to arrange an introduction to her through the hotel manager, and in a few days they were on friendly terms. He assumed a mildly flirtatious attitude, which she didn't rebuke; but she maintained a quiet reserve which discouraged too great familiarity. Pecquot felt that she was not displeased at receiving the attentions of a good-looking young Frenchman, but he also realized that she intended to keep him at a distance.

He had been accustomed to fairly easy successes with women, and Maria Günther's failure to be impressed as readily as some of the others had the very common effect of increasing his interest in her. She was, certainly, a charming and intelligent young woman, a very pleasant companion with whom to spend a few hours daily during a vacation, but gradually Pecquot began to feel that he wanted to

be more to her than a casual summertime acquaintance. He became genuinely enthralled with her, and the shade of enigma that hovered about her—a sadness that seemed to remove her a little from the immediacy of the world that surrounded her, an avoidance of certain subjects—served only to increase his interest.

But one thing worried him: a patriotic Frenchman, and a confirmed believer in democracy, Pecquot feared that if he succeeded in plumbing deeper into her thoughts, he might find that Nazism had left its impress on her mind. He tried, occasionally, to turn the conversation towards politics, particularly German politics—but she always managed to divert the conversation without committing herself. The last thing Pecquot wanted to do was to fall in love with a Nazi—but he felt himself slipping gradually and blissfully into that state, and there were moments when he told himself that he didn't care what she believed in. If her ideas had been warped, he promised himself immodestly, he would teach her better.

In the meantime, he tried to deduce what he could from the few hints she had given him. She had told him that her husband was a retired Army officer, and that he was curator of a state museum located in a historic castle. He assumed that if Colonel Günther held a state post, he must be, if not a Nazi himself, at least not hostile to Nazi ideas. But she herself never expressed herself either for or against Nazism. In fact, she rarely mentioned her husband, from which fact Pecquot assumed (or perhaps hoped) that she might not be on very good terms with him. Her husband's views, in that case, would be no very good guide to her own.

Under the stimulation of her company, Pecquot felt his old energy, temporarily lessened by his accident, return rapidly, and he played a good deal of tennis and golf with Maria Günther. Very often, in the evening, he sat beside her at the piano by the window of the hotel's lounge, looking out over the dark water, sparkling with the reflections of the moon, or the stars, or the lights which rimmed its shore, as she played softly, well, and with understanding. It was on these quiet occasions that he felt closest to her. But her reserve remained a constant wall between them. It was not to break until the evening when he celebrated his birthday.

He told Maria Günther that since he was far from friends and

family, she would have to help him celebrate the occasion. They arranged to dine together outside of the hotel for a change, at a small lakeside restaurant. They sat on an open terrace over the lake, with the water lapping gently about the piles supporting the flooring, soft shaded lights throwing their discreet glow on the table and lighting Maria's cheek so that one side showed fair and soft while the other was thrown into deep shadow. There was a light warm breeze off the lake. The food was excellent, and with their dessert, in honor of the occasion, they had champagne—a good deal of champagne.

"I don't know why I came here," Maria Günther said dreamily, thinking aloud rather than talking to Pecquot. "There are many places in Switzerland that are lovely in the same way that this is lovely—water, and warm nights, and lakeside restaurants. I suppose I just felt like a change—and so I came to the same sort of place where I would have been in my own country."

"I can understand leaving Switzerland for Italy," Pecquot chimed in, "but it's harder to understand your going to Germany. After all, the Swiss are a democratic people. You have a long tradition of independence. How could you abandon that to become a Nazi?"

For the first time, perhaps because the champagne had broken through her shell of discretion, Maria allowed herself to be drawn out.

"But I never became a Nazi!" she cried. "I'm not a Nazi. What made you think that?"

"But your husband is a German official," Pecquot protested.

"Oh—my husband!" Maria said, in a disparaging tone.

Then she leaned across the table and said to Pecquot:

"My dear Captain, I don't believe in inflicting my personal experiences on others . . . and after all one doesn't talk of one's marital experiences to outsiders. But I would like to convince you that I have no sympathy for the Nazis—and certainly my marriage would be the last thing in the world to make me change my mind.

"You see, Captain, I made a very serious mistake when I married. I met Colonel Günther while he was vacationing in Switzerland eight years ago. He seemed to be the pattern of the distinguished Army officer, poised, sure of himself, polite, in a formal sort of way,

and very much the man of the world. I was extremely young, and it was easy for him, thirty years older, to gain a sort of dominance over me. He over-awed me, so to speak. I married him soon after I met him, as much as anything else, I think, because I was afraid to say 'No' to him. He didn't exactly propose—he told me I was going to marry him, and I did what he told me.

"Well, now I know more about what goes on behind the polished exteriors of those military machines. It didn't take me long to discover the faults of German soldiers. They seem to feel it an obligation to drill their families like their recruits. The life of an officer's wife in Germany is very exacting, you know. There's a meticulous ritual they have to go through, and thousands of petty details which military society seems to think of monumental importance—who calls on whom first, who sits in the best chair and who gets the second best, and so forth and so on. I'd been used to a fairly free, easy-going existence, a live and let-live affair, and I was forever making mistakes, and then committing the even more unpardonable sin of letting it be seen that I didn't consider the error in etiquette as very important.

"I hated his kind of life, and at the same time I had to admit that I didn't make him a very good wife—that is, not the kind of wife he needed in his profession, who would go through all the proper motions, and devote herself utterly to facilitating his move up the ladder of promotion. I didn't satisfy him, but I don't know if I could have satisfied him if I had been letter-perfect in everything. He grumbled all the time about my shortcomings, but then he grumbled just as constantly about his men and his fellow-officers, so apparently it wasn't so much what I did or didn't do. He would have complained anyway.

"I also realized, too late, that I had been silly to marry a man so much older than I. I had been very inexperienced and naïve when I met him, and I thought love would come after marriage. Well, it didn't.

"Then Hitler came to power, and he accepted Nazism with enthusiasm. That created another gulf between us—on my side only, for I don't believe he ever knew what my feelings were about that matter. He never discussed it with me. I was a woman, and not

supposed to have any political opinions. He just expressed his own, dogmatically and loudly, and assumed that they would do for both of us, that I would simply accept whatever he decided.

"I believe he attributed it partly to my failure to be the perfect string-pulling Army wife that he reached retirement age without getting his generalcy. I don't think myself that it made any difference. I know his brother officers didn't think very highly of his military qualities, and in peacetime there was no reason why he should expect promotion.

"His connection with the Nazi Party got him a nice plum on retirement, however. He was made curator of a museum. It was in an out-of-the-way spot, perched on top of a mountain. It was very picturesque, and when I returned to it, I always enjoyed its situation for a day or so; but then it would begin to pall. It was like being marooned on a desert island. The space in which one could move about was so limited, and it was so much trouble to get up or down—and there was no company, of course, only the staff of the museum, very dull people, all of them, and the guards—at times I thought I would scream for loneliness.

"At least, my husband did realize that his mountain top was an exceptionally confining place for a young wife, and though his ruling principle is that a wife should go where her husband goes, no matter how disagreeable a spot that might be, he does admit that I take vacations of a few weeks at a time to visit my family. Sometimes I spend all of it with them, sometimes I come here or go somewhere else for part of it. He thinks I'm with them all the time. He wouldn't approve if he knew that I came to places like this alone. He particularly wouldn't approve of my being here tonight, having dinner alone with—" she glanced up at him through the dark lashes of her half-closed eyes with the first mischievous glint he had seen in them—"with a handsome and attractive young man."

"I know you're only making fun of me," Pecquot said, "but I liked hearing you say that."

"Perhaps I wasn't altogether making fun of you," Maria said teasingly. "I think perhaps my husband is right in not approving. I'm beginning to contrast your company with his. That's dangerous."

"Not to my disadvantage, I hope," Pecquot bantered, taking her hand.

Maria withdrew her hand, without haste.

"No, not to your disadvantage," she said slowly.

"Maria," Pecquot said, "if your marriage is such a mistake, why do you go on with it? Are you going to waste all your youth that way? Why don't you get a divorce?"

"First," Maria answered, "because I made the mistake. People have to take the consequences of their errors, you know. And there's no use thinking of anything else. He won't give me a divorce . . . I mentioned it once. He simply refuses. He takes the attitude that I'm a silly child. In fact, he doesn't even believe I meant it seriously. To him, it's just an absurd idea. It's no more important to him than if I were five years old, asking for the moon."

"Then why don't you demand a divorce yourself?"

"You have to have grounds, you know," Maria said. "Nazi law isn't very liberal, but for that matter, there aren't many places where I could get a divorce. Legally, I have no reason to ask for one. His conduct towards me is impeccable." The faintest tinge of bitterness crept into her voice. "If it happens to drive me mad, that's unfortunate. The law doesn't provide for that." She laid her hand on his arm. "Let's walk back," she said, "shall we?"

They left the restaurant, and started slowly back along the shore towards their hotel. The air was soft and warm, and the unreal beauty of the night and the headiness of the wine seemed to have melted the last shreds of Maria's reserve. She walked close to his side, her hand resting with the lightest of pressures on his arm. Her hair brushed his cheek, and its perfume rose in his nostrils. When they reached a bench overlooking the lake, she didn't object when he touched her shoulder and steered her to it. She sank down beside him, and they sat together, silently, watching the broken reflection of the moon which had risen high in the sky above them. He pressed her gently against him. Suddenly she put both arms around his neck, laid her head against his shoulder, and wept silently. Pecquot knew better than to speak. He held her tighter, and waited for the spell to pass.

Suddenly she sat up straight again, and began dabbing her eyes with a tiny handkerchief. '

"Excuse me," she said. "I forgot myself. I'm sorry."

"I'm not," Pecquot answered softly.

"No, don't say that," she returned, heatedly. "It was foolish of me. I was thinking of . . . impossible happiness . . . Jacques! I like you very much. I want to see you again—later, I mean, some other time, after this vacation is over . . . I will write to you, if you are willing . . . and perhaps you would write to me, once in a while. Do you want to?"

"I hoped you would let me, Maria," Pecquot said. "I didn't want our acquaintance to end with the few days we have known each other here."

"You can't do it directly," Maria said. "My husband wouldn't understand. In his circle, married women don't receive letters from men. It's just impossible. But I know how to arrange it. I have a devoted friend in the village at the foot of our mountain. I know I can trust him—for one thing, he detests my husband. I'll tell him I expect letters, and you can write me care of him. I'll give you his address before I leave." She stood up. "It's late, and I'm very tired. We'd better be getting back."

At the hotel, Maria let Pecquot kiss her at her door, but wouldn't let him come in. They arranged to play tennis the following morning, and he went off to his room, happy at the thought that at last Maria, with whom he was now definitely falling in love, was ceding too.

The next morning, at the appointed hour, he knocked at her door. There was no answer. He knocked several times, then went down to the lobby, to see if she were already there. She wasn't in sight, so Pecquot strolled over to the desk.

"Have you seen Frau Günther this morning?" he asked.

"Frau Günther?" the clerk repeated. "Yes, sir. She took the early train, sir. She's gone back to Germany."

The news of Maria's flight tore Pecquot between bitter disappointment and hope. It was very easy to understand what had happened. In the cold morning light, she had repented of having unbent so far

the previous evening, and had decided to leave quickly before she succumbed. But, Pecquot consoled himself, if she had felt it necessary to run away from him, it must be because she felt that he was dangerous to her accepted course of life. She must have some tender feeling for him. For his part, her flight was the last straw. Pecquot knew now that he could not let Maria go. He made up his mind to follow her and find her.

The first step was to learn where she lived. Pecquot inquired of the porter, who said that she had left no forwarding address. But a handsome tip refreshed his memory. He gave Pecquot the address of a castle in Germany, which the Captain judged must be the museum of which Maria had spoken.

Pecquot was on the train the same afternoon, and after a tiresome journey involving several changes, at last reached the site of the castle. It proved, as Maria had said, to be on top of a mountain; and he learned that access to it was only possible at certain hours, when conducted parties of tourists were taken up to it. He had arrived in the evening, and there was nothing to be done until the next day. So he took a room in an inn at the foot of the mountain, and spent a sleepless night, waiting for the moment when he might enter the castle where Maria lived. At ten in the morning, one of a polyglot group of tourists, he set out, his heart pounding.

He had no plan. First, he wanted to get as near as he could to Maria. After that, he would find some way to see her. With the party of tourists, he trooped through room after room, listening dutifully with the others to the historical recitals, the descriptions of pictures and statues, of furniture and armor and battle flags. The guides were long-winded and Pecquot paid very little attention to what they said. His eyes wandered constantly about in all directions, and he roamed through the different rooms of the castle, gazing out of all the windows as though looking at the view, hoping that he would glimpse Maria passing by.

In the end, though, he was lucky. It was his ears, not his eyes, which served him. As the party was passing through a corridor leading from one wing of the castle to another, he heard the sound of a piano. It was a piece he had heard Maria play at Como, and he recognized her touch. It was becoming more distinct. That meant they

were approaching it. Pecquot purposely slowed his step, and let the other members of the party pass him as they moved along.

They reached a door bearing the sign, "No Admittance." It was evident that the piano playing came from behind it. Pecquot now was at the tail end of the procession. He let the others get ahead, and turn a bend of the corridor. He was standing alone, before the door from which the music was coming. He was nervous and indecisive. Perhaps her husband was with her. Well, in that case, he could apologize for having opened the door by mistake, and back out again. He took a deep breath, and pushed it open.

He found himself in what was obviously the curator's apartment. Maria was sitting at the piano, her back towards him; and she was alone.

Pecquot closed the door softly behind him.

"Maria!" he called.

She sprang up with a nervous gasp.

"Oh!" she claimed. "You shouldn't have . . . you're crazy . . . why did you follow me? You know nothing good can come of it. Please go! Hurry! He may come in at any moment."

She cast a fearful glance at a door on the opposite side of the room.

"Tell me where I can meet you," he said.

"No! We mustn't," she said. "It will only cause trouble! I beg of you to go!"

"Not until you say you'll meet me," Pecquot said.

"All right," Maria said. "The inn at the foot of the hill—in an hour. But don't show you know me. I'll find an excuse to speak to you. Now go!"

"You'll really come?" he asked.

"Yes. Yes," Maria said. "I promise. But do please go!"

Pecquot backed out of the door, closing it quietly behind him, and hurried down the corridor in search of his party. He found it a few rooms farther on, and finished the tour of the castle with the group, although he was burning with impatience to get down to the valley again and wait for Maria. When he finally arrived at the inn, he found that Maria had preceded him. She was sitting at the inn's ancient piano, and the innkeeper and a group of local peasants were clustered about it, singing folk songs.

Pecquot, mindful of Maria's injunction not to recognize her, sat down at a table and tried to order sausages and beer. His reading knowledge of German was fair, but his accent was poor, and he had a little difficulty making himself understood. Maria stood up, walked over to the table, and said to the waitress, "Can I help?" and then turned to Pecquot and asked him in French what he wanted. She interpreted his order, and then Pecquot asked her, in German, for the benefit of the others, if she could play any French songs. She said she knew a few, and went back to the piano, where he sat down beside her. She began to play, and under cover of the sound, he asked her in a low voice if any one else in the room understood French.

"*Pensez-vous!*" she said. "They're all peasants here, except the inn-keeper, and even he has never been more than fifty miles from here."

"Good," he said. "Then tell me—why did you run away from me?"

Maria did not answer for a moment. She looked fixedly down at the keys, as her fingers moved softly over them. Then she said, without looking up, quietly, "Because I fell in love with you."

"And I followed you here," Pecquot said, "because I fell in love with you."

Maria struck at the keyboard harshly, banging out noisy chords.

"It's no good," she said angrily. "What can we do about it? It would have been better if you hadn't come. I wanted to get away from you, because I knew it couldn't go on, and the sooner it ended, the better. There's no future for us. You must know that. I'm caught. That's all. It's my own fault. I made a mistake, and I have to pay for it."

"You don't have to make me pay for it, too," Pecquot returned.

"You can't make me change my mind," Maria said. "I've thought it all out. I've thought of everything you could possibly say. I went all through it that night—at Como. . . . You'd better go now. The longer you stay, the worse it's going to be."

"But I can't go and leave you like this—after I've come all this way," Pecquot pleaded.

"You can't do anything else," Maria said. "I'm going in a minute, if you don't—and you won't be able to surprise me again."

"But you don't have to stay here. You can come away. Come to

France, with me. Go to your family in Switzerland. It's a crime for you to stay here, with a man you don't love."

"On the contrary," said Maria, "it would be a crime for me to think that I am so exceptional a creature that I have the right to flout the rules which make others pay for their mistakes. No. It's too late. . . . It's not that I don't want to go with you. I'd rather go with you than do anything else. But if I did that, I would have to be a different woman—another kind of woman from what I am. And that is impossible."

Pecquot saw that she was inflexible.

"At least, let me write," he begged. "Who did you say I might write through? Was it the innkeeper here, perhaps?" That thought had come to him because Maria seemed so much at home in the inn.

"What's the use of keeping the wound open?" Maria asked wearily. "It's no good writing either. There's only one thing to do, and that is forget."

"But suppose something happens!" Pecquot said. "Suppose there is a change in the situation, and you are free again! I wouldn't know! Suppose you were in trouble, and I could help! I'll be in torture, not knowing what is happening to you."

"If there should be a change," Maria said, "I promise that I will write you. Will that satisfy you?"

"Or if you're in trouble?" Pecquot asked.

"Yes, if I'm in trouble and you can help," Maria said. "Now go. The innkeeper is beginning to wonder what we're talking about for so long."

Pecquot looked over towards the bar, where the innkeeper was polishing glasses. The peasants had gone away, one by one, and no one else was in the room. The innkeeper walked slowly the length of the bar, and stared fixedly through the window, at some object in the street. Pecquot bent over Maria, kissed her quickly, and almost ran to the stairs leading to his room.

XV

A New Arrival

"WELL," SAID General de Rensac, when Admiral Beaulieu and myself had finished reconstructing as much of the story as we could remember at the time, "so you think Pecquot's Colonel Günther might be our General Günther? It wouldn't be surprising. The name's not an unusual one—but the coincidence of the castle-museum on top of a hill is certainly striking enough."

"Except," said General Verger, "that when a museum is turned into a prison camp, the curator usually doesn't become the commander."

"But this curator was an officer already," the Admiral pointed out. "One thing is certain—Günther is beyond the retirement age for colonels, all right. Now suppose he had been curator here before the war, and so knew the place well. It wouldn't be so surprising for him to be returned to active service with promotion to the rank of general, and put in command here."

"It could be," said Verger. "Didn't Pecquot mention the name of the castle in his story?"

The Admiral looked at me, and I shook my head.

"I don't believe so, sir," I said. "If he did, I've forgotten it."

"Well," said Verger, "if it is our Günther, it's an interesting coincidence—but I can't see that it helps us any."

"Probably not," said the Admiral, "except that it does open a possibility—a pretty slim one, of course—of enlisting some outside help. For instance, if Günther brought his wife to the castle before, he might do it again—and she's anti-Nazi, and, if Pecquot wasn't exaggerating, she ought to have a bias in favor of French officers. Perhaps she could get in touch with him for us. Or if Pecquot should learn that we're

in the castle he has such an interest in, he might be moved to do something."

"What, for instance?" asked Verger.

None of us could think of any useful service Pecquot could do us. Admiral Beaulieu shrugged his shoulders.

"We're like the proverbial drowning man clutching at a straw," he said. "But Lambert—just the same: see if you can find out anything about our new commander—whether he's married, whether he was curator of a museum here in peacetime, anything that will indicate whether he's Pecquot's Colonel Günther or not. My curiosity is aroused."

"I'll do my best, Admiral," I replied. "I'll see if I can't pump General Günther's orderly. He thinks he can talk French, and he likes to try it out on us. He seems to have selected me as one of his victims. It's pretty painful to listen to him, but I'll let him practice on me. Perhaps I'll be able to draw him out."

It was Gaston who told us the news first. He had it from the *Feldwebel*, who had ordered him to clean out the only remaining unoccupied room in *Gebäude I*, a small, dark, unpleasant chamber.

"Be sure you get it good and clean," he said. "It's for a rare bird."

He smiled happily, and watched Gaston closely to see the effect of his words.

"It's for a Bri-tish Gen-er-al," he said, spacing his syllables emphatically. "They insist that everything be very clean."

This struck us as a particularly interesting bit of news. It seemed to intrigue the Germans, too, several of whom passed it on to us. I met General Günther's orderly, Helmuth, in the kitchen, and tried to get him to talk about his master, but all I could get out of him was talk about the British general. It was the first time, he said, that a British general had been captured. He had been taken in Libya.

The expected arrival would make the third non-French officer among us. We already had a Norwegian and a Pole.

The Norwegian general, Oscar Bruge, had no orderly, so we took turns cleaning up his room. He was a calm, silent man, whom we all learned to respect. But he did not invite or offer confidences, and it

was not until I had seen him several times that I ventured to ask how he had been captured. He told me in short, simple, matter-of-fact sentences.

He had retired to his estate after the conquest of Norway. After the first shock of the occupation had passed, and resistance had begun to organize, he was approached by several patriotic Norwegians, and urged to accept the leadership of an underground anti-Nazi movement, with the object of making Norway too hot for the Germans to hold. He agreed, but there must have been traitors in the organization, for on the following day, two German officers called upon him, and said he was wanted at the Kommandantur, for a routine check-up. Instead, they put him into a plane, and he landed at Dresden. A few hours later, he was in Königstein.

Since he had been imprisoned there, he told me, the Germans had several times offered to free him if he would sign a statement dictated by them asserting his loyalty to Hitler. He had refused each time, and he was resigned to staying in prison indefinitely, if there were no other way to get out.

General Bruge did not mix very much with the French generals, whose language he spoke imperfectly. He occasionally had something to eat with them in the canteen, but in the park he paced back and forth by himself, ignoring the animated conversations in French all about him. His most common companion was the Polish general, Kiewitz, with whom he could talk in German, a language which both spoke fluently. Kiewitz, although he spoke good French, also did not mix much with the French generals, with the exception of General Verger, with whom he had struck up a warm friendship.

The German attitude towards Kiewitz was mixed and inconsistent. Sometimes Helmuth or the others would swear violently about him, for his stubborn defense of Warsaw after the Polish armies had been beaten. And again, sometimes almost in the same breath, he would say: "All the same, it was a wonderful defense. We outnumbered him overwhelmingly, but he gave us plenty of trouble. He's almost as good a soldier as a German!"

Kiewitz, like Bruge, remained uncompromising, refusing to ask or accept favors from the Germans.

Since the two non-French generals in the camp were among the most intransigent, we somehow assumed that the English general would be the same, and we were prepared to honor him for it in advance. Verger and Beaulieu took it for granted also that any English officer would belong to their group of bitter-enders, and would not swell the collaborationist camp.

Another reason for looking forward eagerly to the arrival of the British general was our desire for news. There had now been no new arrivals for three months (it was mid-October), and consequently we had little idea of what had happened in the outside world since that time. Living in Königstein was like existing in a vacuum. All we knew was what the Germans chose to tell us, and we put little faith in their version of world events.

It's true that there were loudspeakers in the central corridor of every building, and that they blared forth the communiqué of the High Command daily. But that was about all we heard, except that whenever a high Nazi official made a speech, we got that too.

A few of the generals who knew German were allowed to subscribe to the *Völkischer Beobachter*, Hitler's own paper, but that was hardly unbiased either. As for foreign newspapers, or uncensored letters, they were *streng verboten*.

Therefore it was with great impatience that we waited for the English general, who would be able to tell us at least what had happened up to the last week or so, and if there were any truth at all in the incessant reports which had been put before us that the British Empire was breaking up, that the Dominions would soon all be independent, that America was too engrossed in her attempt to get hold of the world trade the British were losing to intervene, and that all signs pointed to a German victory. We didn't believe any of these things, but since they were hammered into us day in and day out, and we never heard anything to the contrary, we couldn't help wondering if there weren't perhaps some kernel of truth in the midst of the lies. Now we were to have a chance to reorient ourselves.

General John D. Wright, when he arrived, proved to be the perfect picture of a typical English officer. He conformed to French ideas of the English immediately after his arrival, when he appeared in shorts, and jogged solemnly a considerable number of times around the

courtyard. The French generals smiled tolerantly and muttered to one another comments which ranged from, "*Les Anglais sont tous des sportifs*" to the less complimentary, "*Les Anglais sont fous*." But they received him with the greatest cordiality, which he reciprocated.

The first full day he spent with us, I saw him in the garden engaged in a long conversation with Admiral Beaulieu. The Admiral told me nothing about what he had said when I served him his supper, but from his concerned expression, I judged that the latest news had not been exactly rosy.

I hoped that I might soon have an opportunity to talk with him myself, which, since I spoke good English, I thought might provoke some information. He had arrived with no orderly of his own, and we vied with one another to take care of him, in order to demonstrate our sympathy for an ally. Whenever he passed near us, some one would be sure to salute him with, "*Vive l'Angleterre!*" and he never failed to turn, single out the person who had spoken and favor him with a warm smile.

The arrival of the British officer accentuated the schisms of the French generals. The bitter-enders were also pro-British, and they surrounded him at once whenever he appeared in the garden. Unlike the other non-French generals, he seemed to enjoy being with the French officers, but the collaborationists avoided him like the plague. They were in general Anglophobe, and they did not propose to change their minds even for a fellow prisoner. On the neutral group, his presence seemed to act like a sort of catalyst, detaching some of its members, who joined one or the other of the two extreme parties. And many of those who did not definitely show their sympathies in this fashion, and who had hitherto been too discreet to be classed with one group or the other, indicated their tendencies by their attitude towards General Wright. The manner in which they greeted him in the courtyard or the corridors, their attention or inattention to what he had to say—these were unmistakable signs of their personal opinions.

It was several days before it was my turn to clean General Wright's room. I had already learned from those who had preceded me that

what they had heard from him had discouraged them. He had talked rather freely to them, but most of his news was bad.

"The English general," my comrades told me, "doesn't believe that the British will ever be able to free France. He says that Britain herself is only continuing to fight in the hope that she will wear Germany out sufficiently so that the Nazis will get tired of fighting and grant better peace terms than if Britain surrenders now. Otherwise, England would have asked for an armistice shortly after France."

Another orderly had been told discouraging news of a different kind.

"I asked him," he said, "whether the German reports about how heavily they had hit London in the air blitz in September were true. He was very much upset when he thought of it. He told me that it was improbable that London could ever be rebuilt to be the British capital again, and that not only London, but all the coastal towns were in ruins. He said that the King had had to flee to Canada, and that it was quite possible that the government would follow his example, and transfer its capital to Ottawa."

When my turn came to wait on him, I spoke to him in English when I brought in his morning "coffee." He said he was pleased to hear his language again, and I told him that I had served as French-English interpreter in the Navy.

"You speak English, but you're not friendly to the British?" he asked.

I looked at him in surprise.

"Why, what makes you think so, general?" I asked.

"Because," he laughed, "all the other orderlies greeted me with '*Vive l'Angleterre!*' but you just said, 'Good morning'."

I was surprised at this remark. Hadn't any one warned him that there was a microphone under his bed? He had just revealed to the Germans that the orderlies who had taken care of him before me were pro-British. I thought it better to get out as quickly as possible before any incriminating remarks were made about myself, but before leaving, I picked up one of his shirts, which had fallen to the floor, and hung it up. As I did, I made an astonishing discovery. In

the neckband was sewed the label of a famous Berlin firm which specialized in making shirts to measure for Army officers.

When I got out into the corridor, I stopped and leaned against the wall to recover from the shock of my discovery, and the suspicion it had aroused.

"Could I have been mistaken?" I asked myself. But I was sure that I had seen correctly.

Possibly, I thought, he was held for a few weeks in Berlin and had shirts made there. But no explanation could rid me of the strong suspicion I had suddenly conceived with the sight of that label. I hurried immediately to Admiral Beaulieu's room to tell him what I had seen. He looked up in surprise when I came in, for I had already given him his breakfast before serving General Wright. He realized by the agitated manner in which I signalled him to come to the safe spot in the corridor that I had something important to say, and he rose hastily and followed me out. I had no sooner given him my news than he exclaimed:

"That cinches it! The man's a spy, all right—Gestapo, probably. How stupid of us to fall into the trap!"

"It could be all right, Admiral," I ventured. "He might have bought the shirt from some one else—or perhaps he was held in Berlin for questioning long enough to have some made—"

"*Mais non*, Lambert," the Admiral said. "That isn't the only thing. We were beginning to suspect him, too. For instance, here was one thing we didn't think of at first—he claims to have been captured in Libya, but he's wearing a winter uniform. And then none of us knew his name. After all, we know who the English generals are! But particularly, what he said was beginning to decide us that something was wrong about him. An English general so thoroughly convinced that England would lose the war—well, Lambert, you know the English. Even if they *were* losing the war, you'd never get one of them to believe it. No, what you have discovered simply confirms the other evidence. He's a German, all right."

Two weeks later, General Wright left Königstein—transferred to another prison, we were told. It was clear to us why he had really left. During those two weeks, he had been shunned by all the French

officers. It must have been plain to him that he had been discovered.

But he had achieved half his purpose—or so we imagined. We assumed that he had been sent among us for two reasons: first, to find out which of the generals were pro-British and couldn't be counted on to collaborate, and which, on the contrary, were ripe for proposals of cooperation; second, to sow propaganda among us and convince us that Germany was about to win the war, finally and inevitably.

He had succeeded in the first object. All of the officers had given themselves away, except those who had managed to remain unwavering in the formless "neutral" group. As for the second object, his unmasking had foiled that. We decided, on the contrary, that if the Germans thought it was so important to find out which of us they could use and to convince us that England was losing the war—the opposite must be the truth. If England had really been about to collapse, there would have been no point in so elaborate an attempt to make us believe it.

XVI

Hope

I HAD not seen Helmuth, General Günther's orderly, for several days. I had been waiting for an opportunity to draw him out about his master, which so far had not presented itself. But on the last day of the British general's stay, Helmuth came down to our casemate to exercise his French. He had learned the little he knew of that language as a waiter at the German building of the Paris World's Fair of 1937.

None of the other orderlies could understand him at all, but my gift was due to the fact, which he didn't suspect, that I knew German. It was his habit to throw in German words whenever he couldn't think of their French equivalents, which was more often than not. That was what gave me my advantage. Thus he preferred to talk with me, an arrangement which suited me perfectly.

I thought I could probably get Helmuth, who was as stupid as he was ugly, to say more than he should, but I wasn't sure that I would be able to continue if his superiors knew about our talks, so I drew him over to our "safety zone."

The "safety zone" had been devised by the electricians among us. Since there were microphones under every second bed, they had hit upon the idea of disconnecting two adjacent microphones, and then, with some wire found in the kitchen, extending the wires leading to them to two distant microphones. Thus all the microphones seemed alive for those listening on the other end, but there was a space about three beds wide where we could talk freely. The hook-up was one which could be set up or taken down at a moment's notice, and the connections were always restored to normal when we were out of the casemate, so that a surprise inspection would not reveal what we had done.

Of course, Helmuth had no idea of these arrangements, and I don't know whether he even suspected that there were microphones in the room. I sat down with him on a safe bed, and began a conversation which he thought was intended only to allow him to practise his French. When I judged that he had reached a sufficiently confiding stage, I asked him casually about the commander.

"Is General Günther a bachelor," I asked, "or has he got a wife?"

"*Non, marié, non,*" said Helmuth, but so harshly that it sounded more like a man denying a truth than telling one. So I tried another question:

"Hasn't he ever been married?" I asked.

Helmuth growled in his half-French half-German that his master's private life was no business of mine, which confirmed me in my suspicions that he was trying to cover something up. Remembering Pecquot's story, I thought perhaps there was some reason, some rift between husband and wife, which might have caused Helmuth to try to avoid the subject. In any case, Helmuth seemed to adopt so hostile an attitude towards it, that I thought I had better try another tack.

I remembered that a few days earlier General Günther had delivered an impromptu lecture to a few of the French generals on a portrait of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, which hung on one of the walls of the castle. I referred jokingly to this episode, saying: "I suppose the commander was trying to impress us Frenchmen. How could an old soldier possibly know about such things?"

"He knows all about such things," Helmuth answered heatedly. "Don't be so quick to talk of things *you* know nothing about, my friend. It just happens that General Günther was curator of this very castle when it was a museum, before the war. He knows the history of every stick of furniture and every stone in it. . . . He was retired then, a Colonel. He was promoted and taken back into the Army when the war broke out."

Aha! Then it seemed almost a certainty that this *was* Pecquot's officer. But why the denial that Günther was married? Or was he perhaps divorced by now? Maria might at last have had her way. Or was Helmuth himself ignorant of Günther's past life?

Excusing myself on the grounds of being tired, I went over to my bed and lay down, trying to figure it out, leaving it to the others

to grapple with Helmuth's barbarous French. They succeeded so well that in a few minutes they were calling me back.

"*Hé, Lambert,*" one of them called, "come over here and interpret. He's telling us something interesting—but we're not quite sure what."

I wasn't surprised that what we called Helmuth's "Boche-French" was unintelligible to them. In fact, this time it was with a little difficulty myself that I deciphered what Helmuth was trying to tell Pierre Savignon, General Tellier's orderly: that Tellier would soon be freed—and General Bancard along with him. He said that Pétain himself had sent a request from Vichy that they be liberated, and the request had been granted. And he added that he believed Savignon would be allowed to go back to France with his general.

"Are you sure?" I asked Helmuth. "If you are not, don't give Pierre any false hopes. Freedom means everything to us now; and if you tell Pierre he's going to be freed, and then he isn't, he'll be deeply disappointed."

"I didn't promise him anything," Helmuth said, "but I think he'll go with his general. But about the generals, I'm sure. It's all settled. My general said so. They'll be told officially soon. General Günther thinks highly of these two officers. He says they're not only gentlemen, but intelligent enough to know when a war is over."

There were two pieces of news I would have liked to take to the Admiral—what Helmuth had said about Günther and the reported release of the generals—but it was too late. He left, and behind him the iron doors were slammed and locked for the night. In our private universe, shut away from the outer world, which was recreated each night at seven when those doors closed and made us again pieces of one organism, the speculation began about our release. The news that two of the generals, and perhaps their orderlies, were going to be liberated, had revived an argument which had ended in disappointment only a short time before.

We had had a false alarm in October—a report which originated no one knew where that on November 11, the Armistice Day of the previous war, all French prisoners were to be released. It didn't seem very reasonable, for November 11 was not a date the Germans were

accustomed to celebrate. It stirred up a good deal of excitement, nevertheless, and when I ventured to say that I didn't think we would be freed before the end of the war, I was called a defeatist by those who didn't want any one to lower their hopes.

But on the evening of November 10, General Günther called us together. Some of my comrades were certain that it was to announce our release, but I didn't think so—though this time I took care to keep my thoughts to myself. I turned out to be right.

General Günther said, to summarize his talk:

"I have heard reports that there are rumors among you that you are to be freed tomorrow." (Little shivers of pleasurable anticipation passed through the ranks of the hopeful, but they were quickly dashed). Günther continued sternly:

"What reason have you to expect that the Führer would release you, while all Frenchmen are showing such duplicity towards him and us? What have you done to deserve freedom? Most of you will not admit even yet that the final verdict has been given and that France has been beaten for good. You do not accept yet the generous direction which Germany offers you although she has no need to give you anything, being the stronger. And while some Frenchmen try to persuade him that France is contrite and repentant, that all France is willing at last to collaborate loyally, this fellow de Gaulle, from England, continues stupidly and obstinately to fight against us, and to prove to us that Frenchmen still do not understand."

This was not the first time we had heard of General de Gaulle, and to some of us it was a great satisfaction to know that Frenchmen were still fighting against the Germans. We often heard the German radio fulminate against de Gaulle, and although we had little news of what he was doing, we instinctively began to honor him as the symbol of resistance, knowing that if the Germans were against him, we were for him.

We filed back to our quarters, dispirited because of dashed hopes—and I had no heart to say, "I told you so." Now the report of the coming liberation of the two generals had stirred hopes of freedom again, and bets began to be made on how much longer we would stay in Königstein—whether a year, or six months, or three months, or even less. Renier, on the next bed to me, didn't join in the light-

hearted chatter of the others, but lay on his back, his eyes wide open, staring upwards.

"What are you thinking about?" I asked him. And Renier answered:

"I am thinking of my mill."

XVII

Tea Party

IN THE morning, I told Admiral Beaulieu about my talk with Helmuth.

"Apparently it *is* the same man," the Admiral said. "That's a curious coincidence."

"But I wonder why Helmuth said he wasn't married," I objected.

"I don't know," said the Admiral, "but it dashes any hopes we may have had for getting help from that quarter—though I never had any anyway. If they broke up—and judging from Pecquot's account, that seems very likely—that eliminates Maria."

I told him my second piece of news, about Generals Tellier and Bancard. He seemed deeply shocked.

"But isn't it natural enough, Admiral," I asked, "for the Germans to be lenient towards men who accept their point of view, and aren't likely to work against them if they're released, than to those who *will* seek to fight against them once more if they get out? It's really only a practical measure. The Germans wouldn't bother to tie up men to guard us, or to pay for our keep, except that they want to keep us from fighting them. So as soon as they know we won't fight them, it's to their interest to let us out. I don't approve of the collaborationist attitude of General Tellier and General Bancard, but I'm not surprised that they're being freed because of it."

"It's not that, Lambert," the Admiral said. "I don't care particularly if they are let out because of their opinions—though I wouldn't change mine, or even pretend to change them, to get out. However, it's too late now to shed tears about the mistaken thinking of some of my colleagues, which I am afraid is responsible for our being here now."

"The thing is that I don't believe they are being released simply

because they have decided to conform with German ideology. I'm sure that they are leaving because they have been entrusted by the Germans with some definite mission. You know the Germans. They never do any one a favor for nothing, or take any action without seeing some definite advantage for themselves in it. If they're releasing Tellier and Bancard, it's because they have something for them to do. Perhaps they're supposed to go back to Vichy and spread a little Nazi propaganda, or try to persuade some of our generals who are still free and helping to run the show that France ought to join Germany, as they keep telling us here she should.

"A few days ago they made an offer to General de Rensac. They brought him a pledge, already typed out, and told him he could be released if he would sign it. It was a promise never to bear arms against Germany again, and to collaborate with the Germans unreservedly for the establishment of the new order in Europe in any way which they might indicate. He refused, of course—to begin with, it's contrary to the French military code to sign any such undertaking, with a penalty of loss of citizenship rights, among other things. . . . Well, the word has gone around that freedom can be had under those conditions. Tellier and Bancard must have signed. I wonder what their assignments are?"

"I'm a little surprised at Bancard, though not at Tellier. I never liked him. Too slick. A dangerous man, I think. Verger will be disappointed in him, though. He was one of Tellier's best friends. They were classmates at St. Cyr, and though they have quarrelled lately because of Tellier's pro-German ideas, Verger is still quite fond of him."

Helmuth visited us in the casemate again the following day, smuggling three bottles of beer in under his tunic. He invited me to have a drink with him, a favor which I attributed to the crude flattery with which I had encouraged him to come again on his last appearance. I had told him that his French was coming back rapidly, and that he was making excellent progress. As a matter of fact, I couldn't see that he had improved a bit, but it tickled him and whetted his appetite for more, so I continued to pile it on thick. So this time, after he had pronounced a few terribly mutilated sentences,

I told him, "You're talking almost like a Parisian," and he fairly beamed at me.

I remembered that on his last visit I had gotten information out of him by running down his master, and I decided to try the same technique again. So at the first opportunity, I commiserated with him for having the bad luck to be under an officer who seemed to be particularly crusty.

"No wonder," I said, "that he never succeeded in getting himself a wife."

Stupid Helmuth bristled as I had intended at the insult. He had already drunk one bottle of beer, and I suspected that he had had a few before he arrived.

"First," he said, "General Günther is a German officer, and he behaves as an officer should behave. He's not like your French officers, who have no authority over their men. Second, he's had all the women he wants. German girls understand that kind of man. He's just what they like. And he has a wife, too—a good looker. Much younger than he is."

"You're a damned liar, Helmuth," I said. "You can't put that over on me. You told me yourself, day before yesterday, that he wasn't married. You're just boasting."

"I told you he wasn't married because you were prying too much into what was none of your business," Helmuth retorted. "But you don't need to take my word for it. You'll see for yourself soon. She went to stay with her family in Switzerland soon after the war started, when the General was assigned to active duty; but now that he's in a permanent berth again, she'll surely come back here. She used to live here before, when it was a museum."

The reference to Switzerland banished my last doubts. It seemed certain now that the commander's wife was indeed Pecquot's friend. And there hadn't been a rift! She was probably coming to the castle. Perhaps there might be a chance to enlist her aid yet.

I took the first opportunity to go to Admiral Beaulieu's room, to give him this additional information. General Verger was there when I entered. I set the phonograph going near the microphone, and repeated what I had been told. Admiral Beaulieu nodded.

"I will write to my wife in Paris today," he said to Verger, "and

say something like: 'What's become of my old friend, Pecquot?' She'll probably understand at once that I have some particular reason for inquiring, and will try to locate him. If she doesn't realize it's more than just a casual question the first time, I'll repeat it in a second letter, and I'm sure she'll understand then. He may know where Maria Günther is, and if we can devise any way of communicating with him, he may be able to get some useful information from her—possibly some other route for getting out of here, or the name of her anti-Nazi friend in the village. There's no harm trying. We haven't anything else to do."

General Günther issued an invitation to all the officers to come to his apartment for tea, promising them a lecture on the history of Königstein, which he told them contained many interesting details. Admiral Beaulieu and General de Rensac agreed that the real reason for the invitation was probably to see which officers would accept, as a check on "General Wright's" report on the collaborationists and non-collaborationists among us. In fact, the idea was raised that the non-collaborationists should accept, to confuse him—but it was decided after much discussion that there was no point in hiding an attitude which would have to be avowed anyway, if the other officers were asked to sign the pledge which had been presented to Rensac. So in the end, only 25 officers of the 120 accepted.

We orderlies made a point of being in the courtyard at the hour for which the tea had been arranged. We wanted to see for ourselves which of our officers would accept German hospitality.

No one was surprised to see that General Tellier was one of the first to arrive. Wearing all his medals, he passed by, his arrogant gaze fixed straight ahead, the long livid scar on his left cheek glowing above the whiteness of his closely shaved chin.

None of the orderlies liked Tellier. It was not only because he was one of the loudest and most intolerant of the collaborationists, but because we all resented an incident which had occurred early in our captivity. At that time, he, a French officer, took the part of the German sergeant who was drilling us against one of his own soldiers, on the pretext that military discipline had to be observed, even under an enemy officer.

We hated the morning drill even when we felt our best. One of us happened on this particular day to be feeling nearly at his worst. He was worried because he had not heard from his wife for nearly two months, and in his nervousness, he executed the orders even more badly than we always tried to do them anyway. The sergeant shouted at him, and he returned, "*Va donc, salaud d'allemand, je t'emmerde.*"

The phrase was too idiomatic, and spoken too rapidly, for the sergeant to understand it, but Tellier, who happened to be passing, overheard, and stepped up the German drillmaster.

"Such lack of discipline cannot be tolerated," he told the sergeant. "This man must be severely punished."

"Very well, General," the German answered. "I'll make him run around the courtyard with a punishment pack."

"No, no, said Tellier. "That's insufficient. You must make a report to your superiors, and I will do the same. In prison or out, the discipline of the French Army must be enforced."

And he strode off, leaving the sergeant wondering how to report an insult he hadn't understood.

As a result of Tellier's intervention, General Günther condemned our unfortunate comrade to two weeks' solitary confinement in a dark cell. This was one of the damp, airless underground prison cells dating from medieval times, which were formerly shown as an oddity to gaping tourists who never dreamed that a man would be confined in one in the twentieth century. The disgust which the orderlies felt for Tellier after this incident was unanimous, and it was shared by many of the generals. Beaulieu, Rensac, Verger and some others signed a letter of protest to Günther, but he didn't even bother to answer it. From that time on, several of the non-collaborationist generals refused to speak to Tellier.

After that, we would have been surprised if Tellier had failed to attend the tea, rather than the contrary. But his orderly, Pierre Savignon, who had been very much on the defensive among us, as though he felt himself to blame for his general's attitude, had apparently hoped he wouldn't go. He spat disgustedly on the ground when he saw Tellier enter Günther's quarters.

"I hoped at least he would stay away from the Germans," he said.

"Of course, I know he has some of the same ideas they have—but after all, he did fight them. I could forgive that business of the drill—he's always been a maniac about discipline, you know, to the point of forgetting sometimes that he's a human being. But accepting hospitality from the enemy is another matter."

"But, *mon vieux*," I said, "you didn't have to wait until today to be sure about him. You should have known when we heard he was to be released. After all, they don't let people out of here for nothing, you know. They must have felt they could count on him. It's a lucky break for you, because you get out, too—and you can go as an honest Frenchman. But he hasn't that consolation. He's a collaborationist, and if you can stand that, I don't see why you should feel any worse about it if he takes a cup of tea with his friend the enemy."

I saw Savignon's face blacken, and he clenched his fists. I thought for a moment he was going to hit me, but all he did was to say, with contained fury: "I won't go! I'm not going with him! I won't take freedom on those terms."

"Oh, come, Pierre," I said, "don't be silly! You're not the one who's accepted any terms. One more good Frenchman out of their hands is just that much more gained. You might as well take advantage of it."

"No," Savignon repeated obstinately. "I'm not going out of here because I'm the servant of a traitor, while the honest men stay behind. I won't go with him. I'm ashamed of him."

"But, Pierre," I said, "they'll probably take you out of here anyway. They'll send you to some ordinary camp for enlisted men, instead. I've heard they're pretty bad."

"I don't care," he returned. "It isn't just now that I decided what to do. I made up my mind today, and I was just going to tell him so when General Bancard came in, and I didn't want to make a scene."

"When was this?" I asked.

"At noon, when I was serving him his lunch. He told me he had received official notification that he was to be released, and that the orders from Berlin might arrive at any minute. He said that Günther had informed him that he might take me. I was just opening my

mouth to refuse when Bancard interrupted us. That's not the way I want my freedom. What am I supposed to tell my family when they ask how I got out? That my officer was a traitor? Suppose they think I must have been one, too? No. I'd rather stay a prisoner."

"Listen, Pierre," I said. "Stop thinking of yourself for a moment. You may be able to perform a great service by accepting your freedom. Promise me that you won't let Tellier see how you feel, and plan to leave with him. I have a very special reason for asking, which I can't explain just now, but I assure you that you can perform a patriotic duty by accepting your freedom. Now—does that change your mind?"

Puzzled and doubtful, Savignon promised. The thought I had was that he might carry messages to France for my generals, which might help them to escape. But I didn't want to mention it to Pierre without consulting them about it first.

XVIII

Herr Machiavelli

SOME ONE invented a new nickname for General Günther. It was "Herr Machiavelli." It fitted him perfectly. He moved about the castle rigid and unbending, sometimes with a fixed insincere smile on his thin lips which produced in all of us a painful sensation of falsity.

The ordinary routine of the camp apparently provided insufficient outlets for his energy. At least, he seemed to spend a good deal of time imagining minor annoyances. Early in December he produced one which we resented bitterly. After the morning drill, each orderly was given a piece of linen about the size of a man's hand, on which a red triangle had been painted on the white ground. We were told to sew these insignia on the backs of our tunics, and to wear them always. We protested against being obliged to wear a distinguishing mark, and our officers tried to get the order rescinded, pointing out that there might have been some excuse for tagging us in that fashion if we were allowed to go down into the village, but since we were never let off the rock, where we were seen only by our guardians, who knew all of us, there was no point in it. But Günther was adamant. He had us told that any one seen without the red triangle would spend a week in the dark cell.

Another of his ideas fared less well. He had a set of posters tacked up in all the buildings. They showed a French sailor drowning in a sea of blood, with the words, in big red letters, "Remember Oran." (That referred, of course, to the naval clash between the British and the French ships which refused to join them or go to a neutral port). The German corporal who had the job of putting them up picked the door of General Verger's room as a centrally located spot for displaying a poster in *Gebäude I*, but at the first blow of his hammer,

Verger popped out, took one look at the poster, and ordered it down. The corporal hesitated a moment, then obeyed, and put it up instead on the bulletin board.

The orderlies immediately took charge of the rest. We crossed out the original inscription, and wrote underneath it: "We remember Dunkirk." Some of the collaborationist generals gave us sour looks as we made the change, but none of them dared order us to leave the posters alone, and the non-collaborationists smiled when they saw the change. The same evening, the posters were taken down again; and greatly to our surprise, no reference was ever made to our editing of them.

Psychological warfare in a prison camp seemed to be Günther's hobby. The propaganda was laid on thick and constantly. It was operated by both negative and positive methods—that is, by withholding information on the one hand, and supplying it on the other. The distorted picture this gave us was the only one we could hope to get. We were more thoroughly isolated from the rest of the world in Königstein than if we had been common criminals in an ordinary jail.

Our only means of guessing the truth was to make deductions from what the Germans told us. That is, though we didn't believe them, we used their reports as a basis for guessing their motives in giving them to us, and attempted to progress from there to the actual truth. General Verger once put it: "It's simple. All you have to do is to take the opposite of what they tell us to get the truth." But actually, it was by no means as easy as all that. The Germans were far too clever to feed us so crude a diet as straight lies. They provided instead an amalgam of lies and truth, half-truths, distortions. Trying to interpret it was an art, and a difficult one. It wasn't made any easier by the fact that we had no way of checking afterwards whether or not our guesses had been right, and thus of improving our technique. Every scrap of neutral information was kept away from us.

But we got plenty of the other. At times, it seemed as if the shrill voices of the camp loud speakers would drive us crazy. At first, they had operated only occasionally. Now they seemed to be going all the

time, belching communiqués, highly colored news, inspirational speeches and a constant succession of lectures.

To make it worse, it became almost impossible for the officers to remain alone in one another's company, and thus, by putting their heads together, to try to maintain a sane point of view and counteract the effect of the steady stream of propaganda. German non-commissioned officers, attached to the camp as interpreters, began to frequent the garden during the recreation hours and appear in the canteen in the evenings, when the officers were in the habit of going there. It seemed obvious that they had been assigned to the task of preventing the French officers from speaking freely to one another, even when they were out of range of the microphones.

Occasionally, one of them would try to strike up an acquaintance with one of the French officers. General Martel, a non-collaborationist, reported one day that a non-commissioned officer had engaged him in conversation, and had quickly found an opportunity to explain that he was a Bavarian, that he didn't like Prussians, and that he preferred the French officers to the Nazis. Martel didn't think that his manner of speaking inspired much confidence, and it hardly seemed likely that a real anti-Nazi would have dared say so in such a place. The consensus of opinion was that since there was no way of checking the honesty of any such expression of opinion, the only safe course was to assume that this fellow was an *agent provocateur*, and to avoid contact with him.

The constant German spying began to get on the nerves of the French generals, who could be alone nowhere except in their own rooms. Verger exploded one day, "When I was a cadet in military school, I had to go to the toilet to have any privacy. But here you can even hear those damned loud-speakers in the toilet, and they probably have a microphone in the tank."

The French officers began to suspect that exposure to propaganda was not the only method being used to break down their resistance to Nazi ideas. They decided that a deliberate effort was being made to break them down physically, and thereby weaken their will power. The amount of food given them, to say nothing of its quality, was entirely insufficient, especially for men who had always been accus-

tomed to good living. They were, of course, no longer young, and the effects of a deficient diet made themselves felt much more quickly than would have been the case for young soldiers.

It was true, of course, that food was scarce in Germany, but it did not seem likely that it could have been so scarce as to account for the regimen to which we were subjected, especially as we knew that the Nazis must have picked up a great deal of food in Holland, Belgium and France. We would have appreciated even the diet allowed the German private soldiers, or the workmen who occasionally appeared to make repairs. We often saw them eating, and had occasion to know that the German privates were getting more and better food than the French generals.

One of the first generals to break down under this diet was General Dubert, who suffered from asthma. His condition was aggravated by the poor food, and he had to be taken to the infirmary, where he remained for several days. Admiral Beaulieu took the trouble to call on him there, and have a long talk with him, and came back to make an excellent report on this taciturn, reserved officer whom he had not known very well previously.

"I regret that I didn't get to know Dubert better earlier," he told me. "While some of our healthy officers are yielding to German pressure, Dubert, broken down as he is physically, is holding up beautifully morally. He was given a chance to sign the pledge and go home to take care of his health, but he wouldn't do it. I used to think he was one of the neutrals, and even wondered if he might not swing over to the collaborationists; but I misjudged him. He seems to have kept quiet about his personal opinions because he believes a soldier has no right to judge his superiors, at least not in public, and therefore he will not criticize Marshal Pétain, or those who have followed his example of collaboration. But he won't follow it himself. He's definitely on our side."

"I don't know much about him," I said. "His orderly, Bonnot, seems to find him something of a mystery. He has an interesting face—looks more like a poet or a scientist than a soldier."

"He's a mystic," Beaulieu said. "I suppose you could call him a poet in a way—a moralistic, idealistic poet. He believes human kind-

ness will triumph in the long run, and that the innate goodness of man will inevitably lead to a better future—which requires a little faith nowadays. He's also very religious, in the best sense of the word—no bigotry, but a profound belief in what is divine in man."

The officers refused to complain of the bad food as a matter of principle, in order not to give the Germans the satisfaction of knowing that they were succeeding in what was judged to be their deliberate aim—breaking the spirit of their prisoners through their food. They felt also that greater things were at stake than their own treatment as individuals, and they preferred to accept in silence whatever treatment was imposed on them.

Once in a while, one of them received a package of food from France, and though these would not have seemed particularly luxurious in former days (for food was scarce in France also), they were avidly pounced upon now, particularly as they provided a welcome variety to break the monotony of the unchanging menu of the camp.

There was a minor sensation among the officers when General de Rensac discovered in a package which had come for him a rarity which none of us had seen since we had come to Königstein—an egg. The news spread over the camp like wildfire, and a number of generals took the trouble to come to look at it. In a few minutes, an argument as lively as any that had ever occurred over politics developed on the best way to deal with the egg—whether to poach it, fry it or scramble it. This momentous problem was approached with all the gravity of a general staff meeting, with General de Rensac, as owner of the egg, acting as a sort of impromptu presiding officer.

When all the others had argued themselves out, General de Rensac explained what he would like to do with the egg—and it turned out to be an idea of unexpected rarity. He confessed that he had a strong desire to make chocolate cream with egg, as he used to eat it at home as a boy. And as he had a small piece of chocolate, recently bought from the canteen, in his room, he saw no reason why he shouldn't make the attempt. This project brought out a chorus of objections from some of the generals, who warned him against spoiling the precious egg by an amateurish attempt to concoct chocolate cream;

and the argument finally ended with the dispatching of a solemn delegation of half a dozen generals to the kitchen to ask the cook how to make it.

They formed quite a procession, and a number of other generals, wondering what was up, came over to inquire and were sucked into the parade. The cook was decidedly outnumbered by the time the officers reached the kitchen. They stood about him in a circle, listening intently while he gave his instructions. He gave them a little canned milk—a rare sight also—and lent them a bowl; and they trooped back to get into another argument, this time on whether the egg should be beaten into the melted chocolate and milk, or separately. The decision was a compromise—it would be beaten separately, and the chocolate, milk and water with which to eke it out would be stirred in later.

With a ceremonious gesture, Rensac picked up the egg. Some one knocked on the table for silence. And the generals, with bated breath, craned their necks to watch as Rensac struck the egg sharply against the edge of the bowl. It didn't break. He hit it again, harder this time. The shell splintered—but nothing came out.

Unanimously, the generals broke into a howl of laughter. The egg was hard-boiled.

That was the only egg I saw during my entire stay at Königstein.

XIX

Subtle Pressure

A NOTICE posted on the bulletin board announced that General Günther intended to call on his "French colleagues" individually, one after the other, to inquire personally whether they had any complaints to make about their treatment in the camp.

General Verger shrugged his shoulders as he read it.

"With a copy of the pledge of liberation in one hand and a fountain pen in the other," he commented, indifferent as to whether the microphone behind the board was transmitting his comment or not.

The visits were carried out with Teutonic precision and regularity. Günther made one visit each morning, and one each afternoon. The French officer who was to be honored was instructed to remain in his room at the hour when the others habitually went out into the garden, permitting Günther to talk to him uninterrupted and alone. We suspected that a stenographer had been posted at the other end of the microphone to take down the conversations.

Since there were 120 prisoners, Günther's rate of two visits a day made this a two months' job, which actually took a little longer, since he skipped Sundays, and occasionally failed to keep to his schedule on other days. Long before he had finished, we had a pretty clear idea of what he was driving at. The generals were comparing notes, of course, and we orderlies had a sort of intelligence service of our own, whose raw material was the remarks our various officers made to or before us, which we then pieced together to work out the complete picture. Sometimes the gossip of the German soldiers contributed to the odds and ends of which our fabric of information was made up. They didn't always know they were giving us news, since they assumed we were all ignorant of German, a language

which four of us knew. By common agreement, we had decided not to let that fact out, judging that our ability to understand what was not meant for our ears might be useful to us. I don't think, for instance, that one German non-commissioned officer would have told another in our hearing that Günther had returned from his interview with Verger swearing roundly at "that pig-headed Frenchman" if he had known that we would understand.

As a matter of fact, we had a full report on Verger's conversation with Günther, who visited him among the first of the generals.

Günther had quickly worked the conversation around to the subject of "friendly collaboration between our two countries." To that, Verger said:

"I had better explain to you, General, my view of the present situation in France. I believe that the legal continuity of the French government has been interrupted, that Marshal Pétain abolished the republic without consent of the people who founded it, and that he signed the armistice with Germany as a self-appointed ruler whose acts will later be repudiated as null and void, not binding upon my country. Therefore, I do not recognize the right of this government to speak in the name of France. If Pétain announces the policy of collaboration, he is, so far as I am concerned, speaking only for himself and those who surround him; but he has not committed, and can never commit, France to collaboration, for France has given him no mandate to speak in her name. I hold the laws of the French Republic to be still of legal force, and its acts to be binding upon me. One of those acts, never revoked by any authority which I recognize, and therefore valid today, is the declaration of war, which sent me, as a soldier, to fight against Germany, a duty from which no one has yet absolved me. Another of its acts was the alliance with Great Britain, which I hold to be still binding upon all Frenchmen. But the armistice, and all the acts since the armistice, since they were taken by an illegal government, do not bind me. The war is still going on. Britain and Germany are still fighting. Consequently, France, who bound herself with her ally to make no separate peace, is legally still fighting; and as a French soldier, I could not collaborate with Germany without committing an act of treason."

"Come, come, General," Günther answered, "surely you don't

claim to be a better patriot than Marshal Pétain, the hero of Verdun! If he has decided for collaboration, if he met the Führer and was happy to take his hand, surely you can follow his example!"

"I do not know what pressure or what influences determined the Marshal's actions," General Verger said. "I do not presume to judge him. But my duty as a soldier is to obey the orders of the legally constituted government of my country. That is what I have done and what I will continue to do. If Marshal Pétain had been named my military commander by my government, I would not question his orders in military matters—but the last government whose validity I recognize did not so name him, his own government was not established in accordance with our constitution, and in any case, his orders as a military leader can have no effect in political matters, where he has no jurisdiction. I owe no obedience to him or to his government."

"My dear General," Günther returned ingratiatingly, "aren't you being your own worst enemy? You are arguing like a lawyer, about formalities which have no connection with reality. You are probably aware that two of your brother officers have bowed to the inevitable, and are prepared to work with us, and for the new France, which is now a fact, whether you think its legal basis is sound or not. There is no other France, and they have recognized that fact, and wish to give their services to their country in the future as in the past. They are to be released shortly and will return home. I understand that Marshal Pétain needs them to hold high posts under his government. There is no reason why you, General, should not continue to serve your country as well, if you will only consent to see that you are trying to live in a past which has disappeared and will never return. This is a moment when a little sound realism is needed. Certainly, you are not serving your country here, a prisoner, with no influence in councils which you might help to sway if you went home."

"I am serving my country," Verger retorted, "by refusing to make peace with the enemies who attacked her, and by maintaining my liberty to fight against them again when the pendulum once more swings our way—as I am convinced, General, that it will."

In telling Admiral Beaulieu about this conversation with Günther, Verger said, "I fear I was a little distracted from what Günther was saying by the odor of onions which hung about him. I would have

been irritated by that before I came here; but this time I was so pleased to smell some other kind of food than potatoes, barley soup or codfish, that I could hardly keep from asking him where he got them, and whether I could buy one. It's a good thing he didn't offer me an onion to betray my country."

When Admiral Beaulieu spoke to me about Verger's conversation with Günther, I asked him a most indiscreet question which wouldn't have been possible from an orderly who had not been, like myself, a private secretary to his officer. I had been worried about what seemed to be one chink in General de Rensac's ideological armor, so I ventured:

"May I ask you, Admiral, what General de Rensac thought of General Verger's remarks about Pétain? From some things he has said, I have the impression that he is rather partial to the Marshal."

Beaulieu frowned.

"Well, yes. He served under Pétain. And also, he's a little less outspoken than Verger. Then of course, there's the Marshal's age, and I think Rensac assumes, rightly or wrongly, that an old man's decisions contain a special sort of wisdom born of experience. Personally, I think he feels some loyalty towards his former commander; but as far as the question of collaboration with the Germans is concerned, there Rensac sees eye to eye with Verger. I can assure you of that.

"Would you like to hear what Rensac told me of his own conversation with Günther? It seems that Günther started off with a cynical, man-of-the-world attitude, which might have been appropriate for clever chatter about unimportant things in peacetime Deauville or Cannes, but here it exasperated Rensac at once. He listened until Günther used the word collaboration, and then he stood up abruptly and said:

"General, if you wish to speak to me about collaboration when I am free in France and able to answer you as I think desirable, I will be willing to listen to you then. Here it is quite impossible. Good day, General."

"There was nothing Günther could do except rise and accept dismissal. To have remained after that would have made him look ridiculous. Rensac held the door open for him politely as he left, and

said to him, in the same suave urbane tone which Günther had used himself at the start of the visit: 'I deeply regret that your visit has had to be so short.'

"Rensac said that judging from the look on Günther's face, he ought to expect him to try to take revenge in some fashion or another. But there's not much he can do, beyond hiding a microphone in his pillow to eavesdrop on his dreams, or putting even fewer acorns in his 'coffee'."

XX

The Code

MY CONVERSATIONS with Beaulieu provided my chief pleasures during the dreary months that passed at Königstein. They continued the confidential relationship I had had with him during the war, which had been broken only during the brief spell when he had suspected, not unjustifiably, that perhaps I had given him away. It was encouraging to me, too, to know through the Admiral how many officers there were among us who remained uncompromising before all the temptations the Germans could put before them. The Admiral seemed to enjoy talking to me as much as I did to him. Often when I entered, he would say: "How about a little music, Lambert?"

I knew what that meant. He had something to say to me. So I would set the phonograph going in its regular position next to the microphone, and the conversation would begin.

The morning after we had discussed the political views of Verger and Rensac, the phonograph was already playing when I entered. Apparently, he was so anxious to tell me something that he had started it going himself before I entered.

"My wife is a clever woman, Lambert," he said. "She understood the first time that if I asked after Pecquot frivolously, it was for a special reason. I've just had her answer. I think I know what it means. But just to check on my own conclusions, I want you to read it, and tell me what you make of it."

He folded over the letter, to hide some personal passages, I supposed, and showed me where I should begin to read. The paragraph to which he pointed went like this:

"I have met Jacques de Pecquot. He has an interesting job, one that returns him to his civilian occupation of engineer. You remem-

ber the Bièvre, that underground river which flows through Paris? There has been a great deal of trouble with it lately. Every time there is a heavy rain, it overflows into cellars all along its course. Pecquot has been given the job of regulating the flow of this underground river—perhaps even of finding some way to harness it so it can be put to good use.”

“Well, what do you make of it, Lambert?” the Admiral asked.

“Well, I know about the Bièvre, of course,” I answered slowly. “Matter of fact, it isn’t altogether underground. There’s one open stretch near the Parc Montsouris, and there may be others. It does overflow sometimes in the spring. A friend of mine had his place flooded by it once, when the water came right up into his basement through the sewer. But there wouldn’t be any trouble from it this time of year. Besides, it hardly seems likely that the government would be setting to work on a project like this, which wasn’t even considered urgent in peacetime, in the present circumstances. . . . But, Admiral—I just thought of something—Pecquot wasn’t an engineer, was he?”

“No, Lambert,” Beaulieu said. “He was a lawyer. In fact, he had no head for mechanical things at all. His chief difficulty as a flyer was learning the mechanics of airplane engines. I remember I once tried to explain a fairly simple problem of naval construction to him, and had to give up. He couldn’t make head or tail of it. He just doesn’t have that kind of mind.”

“That’s the clue, then,” I said. “That is the signal to us that there is some sort of hidden meaning here. Madame Beaulieu is obviously trying to convey something to you in a way that won’t be understood by the censors. She knows you will recognize that the idea of Pecquot doing an engineering job is absurd, but they won’t. Now the question is, what is she trying to tell you?”

I read the passage again, slowly and carefully this time.

“I can only see one interpretation, Admiral,” I said finally. “What she stresses is the fact that the Bièvre is an underground river. She uses the phrase twice, and the second time it is even dragged in where it would be more natural to repeat the river’s name. That is evidently what she wants to emphasize. Now what significance is connected with something underground besides the literal one? The

only thing I can think of is underground movements, secret organizations. My guess, therefore, would be that she is trying to tell us that Pecquot has something to do with underground organizations. Now if you apply that meaning to this passage, it looks as though she is saying that there has been a good deal of trouble as a result of underground movements. Pecquot is 'regulating' them, he may even find some way of 'harnessing' them and 'putting them to good use.' It looks to me as though she is trying to tell us that he is working at coordinating spontaneously formed groups who are resisting the Germans, and is trying to organize them into an effective union. I assume there must be some resistance to the Germans in France; it would be only natural. And the fact that we haven't heard about them here is certainly natural enough, too. That's my interpretation, Admiral. Does it sound plausible to you?"

"So plausible that I arrived at exactly the same conclusion myself, Lambert," the Admiral said. "I couldn't think of any other possibility, but I wanted to check myself by seeing if you would arrive at the same result without any hint from me. Since you did, I think we can safely assume that we have read the message correctly."

He was silent for a moment.

"Well, we've made a little progress, Lambert," he resumed. "To begin with, we know that Pecquot is not a prisoner. He is free to move about, and he seems to be involved in an underground movement. That should mean that he has exceptional means of action. Now the question is, does he know where Maria Günther is? And if he does know, has he enough influence over her to enlist her aid? We are still a long way from any glimmering of real hope. But there is no other, so we might as well continue to explore this avenue. As a matter of fact, we've gotten farther along it already than I would ever have expected.

"Now the first thing is to contact Pecquot. You suggested to me the other day that we could use Tellier's orderly to carry a message out. Are you sure he's reliable? He doesn't share his master's ideas, I hope?"

"No, no, Admiral," I said. "I'm certain of him. There was no mistaking his disgust at General Tellier's attitude towards the Germans. In fact, he wanted to refuse to go with Tellier, but I persuaded

him to change his mind because I thought he might be useful. He's absolutely safe. For that matter—excuse me for pointing it out, Admiral—there are no divisions among the orderlies. We have no collaborationists. We are all on your side.”

“The disadvantages of education,” the Admiral murmured, half to himself. “A little learning obscures the issues and makes self-excusing easy. . . . Ah, well, I suppose that is the proof of the value of democracy. It seems that the instincts are surer than reasoning. . . . So you believe we can trust this chap—what's his name, Savignon?—with a message?”

“I'll answer for him, sir,” I said. “Who do you want him to go to—Mme. Beaulieu, I suppose?”

“Yes,” said the Admiral, “it's really more than a simple message I want him to carry. I want him to give her some instructions, and also a code which we can use to communicate with one another without appearing to be carrying on anything but a normal personal correspondence. I will have to work it out to cover any emergency that may come up.”

“Don't you think they may search him before they let him go?” I asked. “You know how thorough they are.”

“I thought of that,” the Admiral said. “They can search him if they like. They won't find anything. He will have to memorize it.”

“I have an important job for you, *mon vieux*,” I said to Pierre Savignon, the next morning. “And now you will find out how you can be of service by accepting your freedom.”

I told him what we wanted him to do, and he accepted without an instant's hesitation.

The next few days were miserable ones for poor Pierre. Beaulieu gave me the code he was to learn, and I drilled him on it all day long, at every opportunity. It had to be done in the rare moments we could snatch away from observation, for we agreed it had better be done in secret, even without the knowledge of our comrades in the dormitory.

The basis of the code was a list of single words, each of which stood for a complete phrase, to cover the various contingencies which might arise. There were also code words for the names of persons,

others to express single ideas likely to recur, such as "General de Rensac's escape," and provisions for spelling out words by the use of initial letters. All the writer had to do was to weave the code words into an innocent sentence, indicating with a harmless flourish of the pen which words were to be decoded. In case all this furnished insufficient means of expression, another sign would indicate that a devious means of expression, like Mme. Beaulieu's "underground river" was being used.

Any one coming upon Savignon and myself, sitting behind a building, would have thought we were crazy from what he would have heard. It would have gone something like this:

Myself: "Ask Pecquot to go to Switzerland."

Savignon: "Bread."

Myself: "Civilian clothes."

Savignon: "Write."

Myself: "Maria Günther."

Savignon: "Church."

And so forth and so on, interminably, until we were both sick of it.

"And to think," Savignon sighed, "that I decided not to become a bookkeeper, as my mother wanted, because it meant too much mental drudgery! Oh, well, it has to be done. Ask me some more."

Savignon learned the code in three days. The Admiral, who insisted on making sure that he had it straight, had me bring him to his room, where, under cover of the phonograph, he quizzed him on it. At the end, his expression showed his satisfaction.

"Letter perfect!" he said to Savignon. "Good boy! Now don't forget it on the way!"

"No, sir," Savignon assured him. "I'll keep repeating it mentally until I get there."

"Now there's one other thing," the Admiral said. "I want you to take this specific message to my wife. Tell her that she is to get hold of Pecquot, inform him that we are imprisoned in the castle to which he once followed Maria Günther, and ask him if he can't find her, and see if any information can be obtained from her which will enable us to escape, either alone or with any aid he may be able to arrange from outside. He of course will have to be sole judge of how

much he can safely tell her. But warn him to be very cautious, for if she should betray our plans, we will find it doubly difficult to succeed in any future attempts."

Beaulieu added that Pecquot should be told that Maria Günther was supposed to be visiting her family in Switzerland, and he might locate her in that way.

"If anything can be done," he said, "tell Pecquot that we think the most useful man to get out first is General de Rensac. If it is possible for two to get away, General Verger would be next best, and I would like to be third on the list. And you had better ask my wife, in case Maria Günther is found, to inform me as quickly as she can through our code, for we may have to be on our guard against any possible traps here, if she should betray us."

I was in the corridor of *Gebäude I* a few days later when Tellier and Bancard came in to say good-bye before leaving. Etiquette demanded that they should slight no one, so, although they realized the hostility of the non-collaborationists towards them, they ignored it, and took leave of them along with the rest.

Tellier said to Admiral Beaulieu, with an embarrassed smile:

"I hope we will be able to greet each other again in France soon."

"I hardly think we will," Beaulieu said dryly. "So long as there are any strings attached to my liberation, I intend to stick it out here, if I have to wait till judgment day."

Tellier turned quickly to Verger, once his closest friend.

"Good-bye, André," he said. "Good luck to you."

He held out his hand. Verger made no move to take it.

"Good-bye," he said gruffly.

Tellier reddened, and rubbed his chin to disguise the meaning of his rejected gesture. He stood still for a moment, indecisively, evidently trying to think of something to say to bridge the awkwardness of the moment. But Verger gave him no opportunity. He turned abruptly and went into his room, closing the door behind him.

Forty-eight hours later, the loud speakers suddenly burst into sound with this announcement:

"Attention! Attention! French officers in Königstein will be inter-

ested to learn that Generals Tellier and Bancard have arrived in Vichy, where they were received at once by Marshal Pétain, Chief of State. The Marshal informed them that he had reserved important functions for them, of which the nature cannot yet be revealed."

XXI

Blackmail

GENERAL GÜNTHER's visits to the generals showed no appreciable result until the day when he called on General Martel, one of the non-collaborationist group. I was working in the Admiral's room at the time of the visit, and through the open door I saw General Günther pass along the corridor as he left. A moment later, General Martel went out also, and shortly I saw him appear in the garden, under the window.

Ordinarily, Martel would go at once to his friends of the non-collaborationists. This time he started in that direction, but then seemed to change his mind, and instead walked over to the wall, and leaned against it, staring moodily out into space. After a few minutes, he started pacing slowly up and down, and then, to my surprise, stopped as if by chance in the part of the garden where the collaborationists were gathered and engaged one of them in conversation.

I couldn't believe that this was only a casual, meaningless variation of his usual habit. The divisions between the generals had become too sharply defined for that. It could only be Martel's way of announcing a change of mind. He was one of the last of the generals I would have expected to shift, and I couldn't imagine what Günther could have said to him to persuade him to collaborate.

I ventured to ask Admiral Beaulieu about Martel's attitude in the afternoon. He told me that the other non-collaborationists were all puzzled, for Martel had made no attempt to explain his change of attitude to any of them.

"Shall I put our private 'intelligence service' to work on it, sir?" I asked.

"I can't see what harm it would do," the Admiral answered, "and

it might be valuable to know what means of pressure was used on Martel. I can't believe that Günther actually succeeded in convincing him. Yes, go ahead."

What we referred to, half in jest, as our intelligence service, was an information pool which we orderlies had worked up. We were much less isolated from the Germans of Königstein than the generals, who lived in a sort of vacuum. We had contacts with the German guards and various employees, and very often we could get odds and ends of news from them, which we would piece together until it made some sort of sense. We also pooled remarks of our own officers in the same way, for non-collaborationist orderlies often told us what their collaborationist masters had unguardedly said in their presence. This particular source of information I had thought better not to mention to the Admiral. I wasn't quite sure how he would take it.

I passed the word around to the other orderlies to be on the alert for the clue to Martel's defection, and in 24 hours we had the answer. It was one of the dividends that our secrecy about our German-speaking members paid. One of the four orderlies who understood that language overheard a conversation between two of Günther's clerks. The secret was blackmail.

When the Germans came into Paris, they took possession of the secret military and police records of the capital. The French state police had always made a practice of gathering all the information they could about the private lives of all persons of any importance in the community—politicians, journalists, military men, industrialists and many others. Supposedly restricted for the inspection of the head of the state police (the *Sûreté Nationale*) and the Minister of the Interior, they often contained the silliest accusations and shreds of unsupported gossip. But at the same time, if any one had any hidden secrets, they were very likely to be found also in the collection of individual dossiers in the possession of the police.

Not only had the Germans acquired these files, but they had also searched the private residences of all high officers, and taken away all documents found there for closer examination. It appeared that the files relating to the officers imprisoned at Königstein had been sent to General Günther, and he had found among them something

compromising to Martel. Exactly what his secret was, our eavesdroppers didn't learn, but from the tone of the conversation they overheard, they judged that it was probably something of the nature of a scandal with a woman or perhaps a question of gambling debts.

But whatever it was, Günther had given Martel his choice of joining the collaborationist group at once, or having the documents turned over to one of the pro-German papers of Paris for publication.

"Are you sure that was the threat?" Admiral Beaulieu asked when I reported to him. "Are you sure he wasn't threatened with prosecution on the basis of some evidence in his dossier?"

"No," I said, "that wasn't it. Our man was quite positive on that point. He didn't get any indication of the exact nature of General Martel's secret, but he was definite that the threat was publication of the information the Germans had, not prosecution."

"Well, that's something," Beaulieu said. "The Germans wouldn't hesitate to threaten a trial if there were grounds, so we can be sure at least that Martel hasn't violated any laws. But there could still be plenty of room for attack against him on moral grounds, which would end his career after the war, whatever happened. Poor Martel! I'm afraid they've trapped him. . . . Oh, Lambert—on your way out, you might see if General Verger is in his room. I think he'd like to know about this. He was quite upset by Martel's curious behavior in the garden, and he might feel better about it to know that his change of comrades was forced upon him."

When I told Verger what we had discovered, he exclaimed angrily, "No methods are too vile for the *canaille*!"

"But, General, what can they expect to gain?" I asked. "They can extort lip service for their ideas by these blackmail methods—but certainly they can't expect any real conversion in an officer whose support is gained by such means. He may have to keep his opinions to himself, but he won't change them."

"I don't think they care what his real opinions are," Verger said gloomily, "as long as they possess a means for forcing him to do them services. The very fact that one of us has been seen to shift from the anti-German to the pro-German camp might be enough to start the

ball rolling, and persuade other waverers to join the procession—and their fidelity to their new masters might be less grudging.

"It's also true that whether Martel wants it that way or not, he is likely to be obliged by the force of circumstances to continue working with the Nazis. As soon as he becomes tagged with being a collaborationist, his own personal future will depend upon the success of the camp to which he belongs. And since he yielded this morning to pressure based on his private interests, there is no reason for believing that he will not continue to be swayed by the same motives. He may hate the Germans, but they have now put him in a position where his interests and theirs coincide; and that he is not prepared to sacrifice himself, he has just demonstrated.

"Then, too, Lambert, you have to consider the state of mind of the blackmailed person. He does not think normally, like a person who has taken his stand on the basis of free choice. Once he has yielded to blackmail, and committed an action he would not otherwise have performed, he is obsessed with a sense of guilt and a need for self-justification. In a good many cases, rationalization provides it, and he finds a defense against his self-accusation by setting up a twisted, perverted morality of his own. You can't argue with such a man, because since he knows unconsciously that he has no logical basis for his attitude, he aggressively repulses the beginning of any argument; and sooner or later, he is fighting for the course he has adopted just as violently—often more violently—as a man who entered upon it through conviction.

"It's a pity. I like Martel. But I'm afraid we can't count on him hereafter, however much the change may have gone against the grain. He's a casualty of psychological warfare."

"How are we ever going to heal all the breaches being created among Frenchmen now after the war?" I asked.

"I don't know," Verger said, "and the Germans hope we won't know. That's their object, in acts like this one—to cause division among Frenchmen, and to knock out as many potential French leaders as possible in order that they will be in better shape for the next war."

"The next war?" I asked, surprised.

"Exactly," said Verger. "Don't make the mistake, Lambert, of

believing that the Germans, like us, think of war only when they are confronted with it, and consider only one war at a time. To them, wars, won or lost, are incidents in the steady progress they desire to make towards world domination. Not to go back any farther, the series of modern wars—against Denmark, against Austria, against France in 1870, against us and our Allies again in 1914, and now the present war—are all part of the same pattern. One of those wars, the previous one, Germany lost, but even as she was losing it, she was preparing to do so on the most advantageous basis to prepare the next one. She capitulated before foreign armies were on her soil, before she had suffered the destruction that we had suffered; and so, though she had lost the war, she began the period of reconstruction just that much ahead of us, because she had so much less to reconstruct.

"This time, there are two possibilities. She may fail to beat England, and in that case she wants a divided, leaderless France, which will not be able to agree at the peace conferences on safeguards against future German aggression, and which, in the following years, will fail once more to unite and stop a new growing German menace before the Reich is once more ready to attack herself. Or she will win the war, and in that case, she wants us to be disunited so that we will not be able to organize our revenge.

"She has good reason for fearing that we will do that, for she knows how she won the war, and she knows also that after the war we cannot fail to discover that, too. And when we learn that we were not beaten militarily, but by treachery—the most cleverly organized treachery in modern history—Frenchmen will pluck up courage again and prepare to strike back at the enemy whose strength, they will then have discovered, is not, after all, overwhelming."

"But, General," I protested, "what do you mean by saying we were not beaten militarily? Isn't it true that the German armies broke through our lines and inflicted a clear defeat on us?"

"But how did they break through our lines?" Verger asked. "How did it happen that they were able to push boldly through the gorges of the Ardennes, without even sending scouts out ahead, as though they knew they would not be opposed there? How did it happen that the weakest of our armies was posted at the very point where

they entered France, although that was the logical place to expect them? How did it happen that the bridges of the Meuse did not blow up before them? How did it happen that when they undertook the risky operation of throwing a thin arm out towards the sea, between our forces in Belgium and those in northern France, that the armies in France never struck from the south against that vulnerable line, although Lord Gort's men hit from the north and achieved their objectives—but had to fall back because we didn't move? How did it happen that retreat orders were always received at the exact moment necessary to clear a path for the Germans, before there had been any contact to justify a retreat? No, Lambert, we were not beaten by German generals; we were beaten by French generals; and some day, after the war, we shall know their names.

"The Germans know that when we learn what happened to us, our anger will be terrible. They know our fighting power, even if we today, for the moment, doubt it ourselves. They know that they overcame it this time by guile; but they know also that that will not work again, for next time we will be wise with the knowledge of how they defeated us before.

"So what they are trying to do now is to sow the seeds of disunion which will prevent us from acting on our knowledge, when we acquire it. They are trying to force the generals who would be our natural leaders against them into compromising positions, which will prevent them from assuming that leadership. They may break their spirits, or they may destroy their prestige. Any way will do, so long as they succeed in ridding us of our chiefs. General Martel was one of the men on their blacklist, one of the uncompromising enemies they had to fear in the next war. Now they needn't go to the trouble of killing him, physically, in warfare; they have already killed him, morally, in advance. The enemy holds over him forever the threat of revelation of some episode in his past which he believes would wreck his future. They have him either way. He dare not lead the French against them again for fear of exposure; but if he should defy the threat, then they would only have to reveal their evidence, and he would become unacceptable as a leader. So there you have one French general already knocked out of the next war—20 or 25 years before that war will begin."

XXII

Kiewitz

WHEN GENERAL VERGER had spoken of General Martel as being on the German blacklist, I had assumed that he had used the word figuratively. But as I considered the action of General Günther, in making his painstaking individual visits, one by one, to our 120 officers, it began to seem evident that an actual blacklist must exist. It would not be like the thorough Germans to conduct this long investigation, without setting down the results. And the mere classification of the generals into irreconcilables, neutrals and collaborationists would provide, in the first group of names, a blacklist.

I was shortly to be a witness to an episode which strengthened my belief that the Nazis actually were drawing up a definite blacklist, and that they would stop at nothing to eliminate those who stood high on that list as convinced and stubborn enemies, who would not forgive them, even after the war.

The hero of this episode was the one Polish officer in the camp, General Kiewitz, who had maintained a consistent and open hostility to the Germans which nothing seemed able to shake.

When General Günther announced his intention of visiting the generals individually, the French officers, even the irreconcilables, received him, unwelcome though his calls were, on the theory that they could not refuse the commander of the camp. Kiewitz was of a different opinion. He sent a note to General Günther, reading:

"I have been apprised, General, of your intention of calling on me. I am obliged to inform you that it is impossible for me to receive a German officer while my country remains occupied by German troops, while the damage inflicted on our towns and villages has not

been repaired, and while no compensation has been made to the families of murdered Polish civilians."

Günther, as we learned from the gossip of the German guards, was livid with rage when he received this note. But he concealed his sentiments, and instead persuaded one of the collaborationist French generals to call on Kiewitz, and deliver a message for him. This was to the effect that the Germans, as a nation of soldiers, knew how to admire the military qualities, and that they had the greatest respect for Kiewitz as the brilliant defender of Warsaw; and, therefore, that they intended to release Kiewitz immediately and unconditionally, and send him back to Warsaw.

Kiewitz replied to the French general who had brought him this proposal:

"Kindly inform General Günther that it is quite impossible for me to accept. Do they think I am such a fool that I don't realize that simply consenting to their proposition would be to serve their propaganda? I know why they want me to go back to Warsaw. In spite of our defeat, the spirit of resistance of the Polish people is unbroken. One of the sources of this resistance is the inspiration derived from the heroic resistance of Warsaw by the brave men whom I was privileged to lead. Because I was their general, my name has become the symbol of that defense, but if I go back to Warsaw, in apparent freedom, appearing in the streets while the Germans still rule them, I will become instead the symbol of accepted defeat. And how could any one be free in Poland under the Germans? They would hold me quite as firmly as they do here. No, I am not going to give them the chance to say to my countrymen: 'You see? One of your leaders who fought us most stubbornly has realized that what has been done cannot be undone. He has accepted the inevitable, and he has returned to resume his place in the life of Poland, under German rule. He is a reasonable man, and you too should learn from his example to be reasonable also.' Well, I am not a reasonable man, and I do not want my countrymen to be reasonable men either. I want them to see, as I do, when they look at a German, only one thing—an enemy. And from an enemy, I will not accept even my freedom—much less this false freedom which is offered me. *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.*"

Snow fell at Königstein. It lay in a deep blanket over the ground, and turned the castle into a fairy-book picture. We orderlies failed to appreciate the beauty of the scene as we stood in the courtyard at 5 A.M., stamping our feet to get warm, and waiting for the Feldwebel to arrive to put us through our daily drill.

Suddenly an unusual detail caught my eye. The door of *Gebäude IV* was ajar, though ordinarily the officers' buildings were kept closed until breakfast time. As I watched, the door swung wide open, and General Kiewitz came out, escorted by a German officer whom I failed to recognize. It seemed to me that they were talking angrily, but they were too far away for me to hear anything. They disappeared around the corner of the building, towards the exit tunnel. Kiewitz was carrying a small bag, and so I assumed at once that he was leaving the camp.

I immediately asked if any one had heard anything about a departure of General Kiewitz, but none of the orderlies were able to throw any light on this mysterious early morning excursion.

When I brought the Admiral his morning drink, I told him what I had seen. He showed evident surprise.

"That's curious," he said. "I know he is in their bad books. He has been tougher than any of us, and extremely outspoken. His refusal to accept release must have angered the Germans. Perhaps they're going to take him to Warsaw anyway, and turn him loose there . . . That doesn't fit in with spiriting him out of the building so early, though. That looks as though they wanted to hide something."

As it happened, Lieutenant Greffe passed through the corridor a few minutes later on a tour of inspection. The Admiral called to him.

"Excuse me, Lieutenant, would you mind giving me a little information?"

The Lieutenant beamed. He bowed politely, flattered at having been addressed by one of the high non-collaborationist officers, who usually affected not to see him.

"At your service, Admiral," he replied.

"Tell me, Lieutenant, where has General Kiewitz been taken?"

Greffe was obviously surprised by a question which he had not expected. He threw a black look in my direction, suspecting, of

course, that only I could have told the Admiral what had happened at so early an hour, before he was out of bed, and hesitated for a moment before answering:

"He has been sent to the hospital, for examination. He has been complaining of his heart."

"Ah," said the Admiral. "To a hospital? Do you happen to know where?"

"Why—er—in Dresden, I believe," Greffe stammered.

"Oh, well," said the Admiral, with an air of great relief, "that is nearby. I can expect him back this evening, then. I have arranged a chess game with him."

"Yes, yes, certainly," Greffe said, more embarrassed than ever. "Of course. No doubt he will be back. Unless, of course, they keep him a few days . . . for observation, you know . . . they often do . . . And now, if you'll excuse me, Admiral—my inspection."

And he saluted and hurried off, to avoid more questioning. Beau-lieu looked after him thoughtfully.

"Not very clever, our lieutenant," he said. "I wonder what he would have answered if I had asked him whether he approved of pulling a sick man out of bed so early in the morning to send him off to the hospital? I don't like the looks of it. Something is up about Kiewitz, and whatever it is, I don't feel that Greffe is telling us the truth. Knowing our Teutonic friends, I can't imagine that it's anything good."

We orderlies mobilized our "intelligence service" to try to find out something about the fate of General Kiewitz, but it proved to be the toughest assignment we had had yet. The four of us who spoke German spent all our spare time within hearing of our German jailers, but there was never a reference to the Polish general. I tried to sound Helmuth out, without success, and I came to the conclusion that he knew nothing about it, and very probably none of the clerks or guards did either, which would account for their silence. I wondered if perhaps one reason for the early morning removal was to keep the secret from the Germans as well as from us. Possibly the truth was known only to Günther, to Greffe, and to the officer who had taken Kiewitz away, whom I had seen from a distance, but

who, I was reasonably sure, was not a member of the regular garrison.

I reported to General Verger about a week after Kiewitz's disappearance of our complete failure, up to then, to find out anything at all.

"We are trying, too, Lambert," he said, "but so far we have been no more successful than you. Keep your eyes and ears open; we may have news yet."

Verger, who had known the Polish general better than the others, and who had a great liking for him, was greatly concerned about what might have happened to him.

"I wish I could get around more myself," he said, "but in this cold weather, I can't pass among the buildings as much as I want to. It's pretty cold out for this washable uniform, and it's the only one I have. Whenever I want to leave this building, I have to borrow some one's coat, and I don't like to do that."

The winter had brought a new hardship to many of the generals. Few of them had any warm clothing. They had been captured during the summer campaign, and most of them had only light warm-weather uniforms. Those who had been taken on active field service usually had nothing at all except the clothes they happened to be wearing at the time, though a few had been fortunate enough to be able to bring bags with them.

Rumors were afloat—no one seemed to know where they had originated—that winter uniforms were being sent us from France. There was no chance of getting them in Germany, where the wool shortage was acute. Some of the collaborationist officers had gone so far as to accept German uniforms from Günther, which they transformed to make them resemble French uniforms as much as possible. General's stars for them were cut out from sardine cans—but even the collaborationists looked highly embarrassed in their modified German uniforms with the tin stars.

General Verger was one of those who were worst off. He had been wearing a linen uniform when he was captured, having previously lost his light spring overcoat in action. He had been able to bring with him absolutely nothing except what he had on at the time.

I knew that the canteen keeper had a hunting suit which was of no use to him, hunting being banned during the war. I asked him if he was interested in selling it, and he said he was. I thought that perhaps General Verger, though he preferred shivering to accepting a German uniform, would not mind acquiring a German civilian costume.

But when I suggested it to him, he shook his head: "No, thank you, Lambert," he said. "I appreciate your thoughtfulness, but I don't intend to expose us to ridicule before the Germans by providing them with the spectacle of a French general wearing the second-hand hunting suit of their canteen-keeper. Our collaborationists are already providing a grotesque enough picture with their denationalized German uniforms . . . I hope I will have a warm uniform soon. We have been promised some from France."

General Verger did not get the new uniform in time to be able to participate in one of the very few distractions afforded the prisoners. We were told that once a month we would be permitted to go down to the village to see a moving picture performance in the small village cinema, which on that day would be open for us only. The entrance fee for each person attending was to be deducted from his pay as prisoner of war. The generals consulted, assumed that the reason why this relaxation had been offered them was to expose them to propaganda through a new medium, and answered that they would be pleased to accept this privilege if it were guaranteed that the films they were shown would not deal with the war. They were given the assurance that they would see the regular program of the cinema, and that their monthly visit would be timed for some week when the feature picture did not concern the war. On this basis, they agreed.

We were taken down through the tunnel under heavy guard. We were marched to the theatre, and guards were posted at every door. The orderlies sat in the front rows and the generals in back.

So far as the feature picture was concerned, the Germans kept their promise. But when the news reel began, it seemed exceptionally long, and concerned almost exclusively with military subjects. It was curious to see a news reel about the war inspired by the point of view of the enemy. The scenes presented had in general little to do with

political angles, but showed military views, the purpose being, apparently, to impress the Frenchmen with the brilliance of the German Army.

And, as a matter of fact, they were impressed. I sat in the last row of the orderlies, with the generals just behind me, and I heard them commenting to one another:

"Look! see how they use machine-guns to support a tank attack. That's odd, that manner of using a flame-thrower. . . . Just note that—complete destruction! Magnificent!"

"Ah! If only I had had a gun that could have been set up so quickly! Then I could have done something. But horses was all I had, General, nothing but horses! No mechanized artillery at all."

"Clever, the way they go after those machine-gun nests with grenades. They seem to have better grenades than we had."

"Do you think their grenade was more deadly than ours?"

"Well, there! See for yourself! That cleaned everything out. A charge now, and the position is taken!"

"Those heavy tanks seem to be able to go across any kind of ground!"

"And the reason why they manoeuvre so well together is that they get the orders directly by radio, uncoded."

"What, uncoded?"

"Exactly—that's a German innovation that I don't agree with. Imagine! Any one can pick up the messages and know just what you're doing! It's too risky!"

"Seems to work all right, though. Maybe we ought to think that one over. After all, in battle, you don't want tank crews to lose time decoding, or make mistakes—and things move so fast that before the enemy can make use of what he hears there's a new manoeuvre under way. Perhaps we missed a point there."

And so forth and so on. If the Germans had taken the trouble to bring us down the mountain to impress the French generals with their strength and military ability, they must have been satisfied with the result.

When we emerged at the top of our tunnel to enter our familiar little world again, we realized more sharply than before that we were

prisoners, by contrast with our brief taste of comparative freedom. I was walking with Admiral Beaulieu, and with him encountered Generals Verger and Dubert, who had not gone with us. Beaulieu launched into an account of the military films he had seen, expecting them to be interested, but they were preoccupied with something else.

"We have an idea," Verger said. "Dubert's asthma has been getting worse. They've tried to treat it at the infirmary several times, but without much success. He's going to ask tomorrow that he be sent to a regular hospital for treatment. Now if they send him to Dresden, to the same hospital as Kiewitz, which seems more likely than not, he may be able to pick up some news about him. He's going to try anyway."

"But don't you think Greffe was lying?" Beaulieu asked.

"If he's not at the Dresden Hospital, then I can find out at least that much," Dubert said.

"I think it's very possible they did take him to the hospital," Verger said. "I have no doubt that Greffe was hiding something—but he's too slow-witted to have produced any very original explanation on the spur of the moment, so I wouldn't be surprised if that much was true. Anyway, Dubert needs treatment, and while he's getting it, he might as well do a little detective work for us."

XXIII

News From Home

GASTON, General Verger's orderly, came up to me in the courtyard.

"Lambert," he said, "you're a clever chap. I wonder if you could help me out. I've had a letter from my wife, and there's one paragraph that doesn't seem to make sense. The only thing I can imagine is that she may be trying to tell me something without the censor's understanding it—but I'm beat if I can understand it either. Maybe you can figure it out."

I read the paragraph he pointed out to me. It said:

"I have something to tell you which has nothing to do with us, but which you may be interested to hear. You remember my friend, Juliette, whom I like so much. Since her husband left her, she had been living a quiet, retired life, but about a week ago, Jean Le-balafre (you remember him) suddenly turned up and called on her. It was a surprise to all of us, because we thought he was still away on a trip. Since then, they have been out together quite often. I don't know what's going on—whether it's just a mild flirtation or something more serious. But I certainly don't approve, and I don't think her husband would, either, if he knew."

"Well, I'm in the same position as the censor," I said. "It would be unintelligible to him because he wouldn't know the people mentioned, and I can't figure it out for the same reason. It must be intended to mean something to you alone, because you do know the people in it."

"That's just the trouble," said Gaston. "I don't."

"You mean that these people your wife talks about as though you knew them are complete strangers to you?" I asked, surprised.

"I can't think of any Juliette, and I'm certain I never knew any

one named Lebalafré," Gaston said. "In fact, I never heard of any one having a name like that, except that American gangster."

"That must be it," I said slowly. "Yes, that's the clue. Your wife writes about people she says you know, but you haven't heard their names before. Lebalafré must be, not a name, but a description. [Le Balafré means "Scarface."] Who do you know with a scar on his face?"

Gaston wrinkled up his brow, in what gave every appearance of being exceedingly painful thinking. Finally he shook his head dolefully.

"Nobody," he said, "I don't know a soul with a scar . . . wait a minute now. There was Jean Dubosc. Didn't he have a scar under his chin? I think he told me once that he had been kicked by a horse. . . . I'm not sure whether he had or not. . . . It seems to me he had, though . . ."

I interrupted this animated argument Gaston was having with himself.

"Who is this Jean Dubosc?" I asked.

"Oh, he's a friend of ours—shipping clerk in a department store. But as to whether he had a scar or not . . ."

"Forget it," I said impatiently. "It's not Jean Dubosc. Your wife isn't worrying about hiding the identity of shipping clerks from the Germans. It must be some one more important than that—some one whose real name they'd recognize. Can't you think of any one else?"

But he couldn't; so I switched to Juliette. But here again I had no success. Gaston dredged the depths of his memory, and all he could bring up was another nonentity—a friend of his wife named Jacqueline.

"Only I wouldn't have said that my wife liked her so much," he pondered. "She was too pretty. You know how women are. She had blue eyes—but a curious shade, very deep blue—and dark brown hair."

"And how was her figure?" I asked, trying to be sarcastic.

"Very nice," Gaston said, just as seriously as though it meant something.

"For goodness sake, Gaston," I said. "Try to remember what I just pointed out to you—that your wife can't possibly be referring to

unimportant persons whose names wouldn't mean anything to the Germans. If she wanted to say anything about Jacqueline, she would write her name out, quite plainly. What could that possibly tell the Germans? Or what could such persons be doing that would be worth taking so much trouble to tell you? Can't you think of any one she might mean by Juliette?"

He couldn't. In desperation, I tried to find the needle in the haystack myself.

"What kind of people does your wife know?" I asked. "What sort of people do you both know? What did she do before the war? Was she a housewife, or did she work?"

"She worked," Gaston said. "She's a lady's maid."

"Now we're getting somewhere!" I said. "It may have something to do with the family she works for. Who are they?"

"Why, she's the maid of General Verger's wife," Gaston replied.

"Well, I'll be damned!" I shouted. I could have choked him for his stupidity in not telling me that at once. "Why didn't you say so!"

"Why, does it matter?" Gaston asked.

"Matter! Of course it matters!" I exclaimed. "If I had known that, I would have had something to go on. The maid of Verger's wife writes you what seems to be a code message to the prison where General Verger is confined, and you don't even mention it to me!"

"I thought you knew," Gaston apologized. "I thought you knew I was Verger's valet before he took me into the army with him to be his orderly. We worked as a couple, you see—I was the valet, my wife was the maid."

"All right, all right," I said impatiently. "Skip the rest of the family history. We know all we need to. Your wife certainly had something to say about Verger—perhaps she wanted to get a message to you for him, for his wife or about his wife. Of course, she couldn't use *his* name. The censor here would have spotted that right away. . . . Now, concentrate on the Vergers, and their friends. Any Juliette there?"

"Why, of course," Gaston answered, open-mouthed. "How silly of me! Mme. Verger's name is Juliette."

"So!" I said. "Now, we're getting somewhere. Now, how about this 'Scarface.' Any one among their friends with a scar?"

Gaston screwed up his brows once more, and reflected lengthily. Finally he shook his head.

We seemed to be stuck again. I started to run over in my mind the few persons I knew with whom Verger was on good terms. And suddenly a light burst upon me.

"Gaston!" I almost shouted. "Was General Tellier a friend of the Vergers in Paris?"

"Of course," he answered. "He came to the house often."

"Well, for goodness' sake, man," I said, "where are your wits? Have you forgotten that wound on Tellier's cheek?"

Gaston's jaw dropped again.

"Why, of course," he said. "Then 'Scarface' must be Tellier!"

"Brilliant," I said. "Brilliant! It's fortunate I didn't have to depend on you to work it out. All right. Now it's plain enough what that letter means. Tellier has returned and has called on Mme. Verger, who is going out with him—and your wife doesn't like the looks of it."

"Do you suppose she meant for me to tell the General?" Gaston asked.

"I don't know," I said slowly. "And even if she did, I don't know whether we should. If it's a flirtation, he can't do anything about it from here, and knowledge of it would only upset him. On the other hand, there may be more to it than that. You know how the Germans have tried to work on people through their families. Tell me all you know about Tellier and the Vergers."

What Gaston had to tell me didn't help me a great deal. He said that before the war, Tellier had visited the house frequently. Gaston's wife had always believed he came to see Juliette Verger rather than the General, but Gaston had pooh-poohed that idea. From his wife's letter, it sounded as though she were still influenced by the same viewpoint, in which Gaston thought she was mistaken. He felt that his wife, who was devoted to the Verger family (the two parents and an eight-year-old son), was too ready to worry that something might disturb its happiness. For his part, he said, he had too high an opinion of Mme. Verger to consider any outsider dangerous, but his wife, while agreeing with him in general, thought Tellier dangerously seductive and too handsome for any woman's good. Gaston,

who thought Tellier a "cold fish," couldn't see why he should have charm for any woman, and certainly didn't subscribe to the idea that he was handsome. It all seemed to boil down to this: if you accepted the opinion of Gaston's wife, who was on the spot, it was probably a question of a flirtation; if you accepted Gaston's, handed down from a distance, that was highly unlikely.

Just one thing Gaston said caused me to interrupt him and ask a few questions. Gaston had said that Mme. Verger had left Paris for Marseilles before the Germans entered the capital. Now the Vergers, as Gaston informed me in answer to my first question, had no address in Marseilles. Tellier knew how to find Mme. Verger in Paris, but how had he located her so quickly in Marseilles (for the letter was dated only a day or two after the announcement we had heard of Tellier's arrival in Vichy)? Mme. Verger was only one of several million persons who had fled to the south and taken up temporary quarters. Often members of a family had been separated and hadn't been able to find one another for months. It seemed odd to me that Tellier could arrive in France from Königstein and go straight to Mme. Verger's new address.

Ordinarily, it would have been natural to think that Verger might have confided a message to his wife to Tellier. But I had been present at their parting, and I was quite sure that he had not done so.

"Do you think General Verger might have given his wife's present address to Tellier?" I asked.

"I don't think so," Gaston said. "They were on very bad terms. *You* think you saw a scene between them—but you didn't hear them argue in private, as I did. They were cold in public, but they were violent when they were alone—until lately, that is. They had stopped talking to each other completely for some weeks before Tellier left."

"How about earlier, before they fell out?" I persisted.

"General Verger didn't know himself," Gaston said. "His wife got out of Paris while he was in the field, and the first news he had was when she wrote him here. I suppose she got the address through the Army. There was already a rift between Verger and Tellier then. As for later—well, there wouldn't have been a chance after the first big blow-up they had. It started quietly enough, although Verger didn't mince words. He spoke in a restrained tone, but sharply and

coldly—he told Tellier bluntly that in his opinion he was an abject person and a traitor to France. Tellier tried to smooth it over at first, arguing that he was acting for France's best interests—but then Verger really lost his temper. He called Tellier a German lackey and a toady, and Tellier said he was a pig-headed fool who didn't know when he was beaten. I'll take my oath that after that Verger wouldn't have given his wife's address, let alone a message for her, to Tellier."

I thought it over for a moment. It all seemed to fit in with the thought I had had—if Tellier was doing some sort of errand for the Germans, they could very well have given him the address, for they saw all the incoming and outgoing mail of the generals.

"I tell you, Gaston," I said finally. "Here's what I suggest. Don't say anything to your general about it—at least, not yet. There's no point disturbing him about a personal matter in which he's powerless to act. But let's try to find out a little more about what is going on. Write to your wife, and somewhere in the middle of it—not too soon, because you want it to seem unimportant—just refer lightly to the romance of Juliette and Lebalafre, and ask if there's anything new on it. No! I'll write that paragraph myself, and you put it into your next letter."

What I had in mind was the German blacklist. Verger must be on it. Was Tellier trying, I wondered, to discover some chink in Verger's armor, so the Germans could do to him what they had done to Martel? Possibly, if Gaston's wife were right, Tellier had found the assignment a pleasant one.

XXIV

"Special Section"

GENERAL DUBERT had been gone for several days, and there was no news from him.

"Perhaps," General Verger said, "the length of his absence is a good sign. He may be prolonging his stay because he's on the track of news about Kiewitz."

"Or perhaps," said the Admiral dryly, "it's only because the food is better in the hospital. It couldn't very well be worse."

The food situation had become very bad, except for those generals who attended General Günther's receptions. The buffet there had become quite elaborate, and there seemed little doubt that some of the French generals who attended had been reduced to accepting an enemy's hospitality solely to get some palatable food. At the last lecture-reception Günther had given, two generals from the neutral group who had never answered one of his invitations before shamefacedly joined the group.

"If this keeps on," Rensac said, "there won't be any neutrals left. Of course, they go there for the sandwiches and pastry, but they can't help getting some of the lecture with it. I hope it doesn't impress them too much."

For Günther's lectures were now definitely propaganda. He had begun with the history of Königstein, which was a neutral enough subject, but this latest one had been on "The Basic Principles of the New Europe."

"Perhaps one of us ought to go to those lectures," Beaulieu said, "to study the nature of their propaganda."

"If your appetite impels you to want to study their propaganda, go right ahead," Verger said with a smile, but as Beaulieu started to protest, added hurriedly: "Don't take it seriously. I was only joking."

If you really want to know, why don't you check up with your former second, Admiral Level? I understand he's been going pretty regularly lately."

"I haven't been seeing much of him," Beaulieu said. "We were fairly close before the armistice, though we were always associates rather than friends. But since we've been here, we've become a little estranged. He's never said anything to me one way or the other about collaboration, but I have the feeling that he has lost interest in political matters. He never talks about anything except mathematics or bridge. Those two things don't seem to give him any reasons for passing up Günther's sandwiches."

I made a mental note to check with Renier on his Admiral's sentiments.

The plight of the generals who refused stubbornly to be lured to the double feast—food and propaganda—was exaggerated by the fact that Günther held his receptions on Saturdays. This was the day when the canteen keeper went into the village, and was allowed to make purchases of extra food for the generals. It was easy enough for the generals to pay for extras, for all of them, in accordance with international convention, received pay suitable to their rank while in prison; but as prisoners, they had no ration books. The only things they could purchase, therefore, were unrationed commodities—which were few in number, and almost unobtainable as well. Thus, while the loyal generals were regarding ruefully whatever meager finds the canteen keeper had produced, they could picture their unworthy brethren washing down Günther's good food with hot tea—a maddening thought.

On the day of the particular lecture which I've just mentioned, the day's find was meager—a few radishes and turnips, and two cauliflowers. To this, one of the generals added a small tin of sardines which his wife had sent him, lying gallantly that he didn't like sardines and would be glad to add them to the general store. The tin of sardines was opened, and its owner, regarding it somewhat with the air of a child obliged to divide his birthday cake with an over-numerous list of guests, turned to a fellow officer, and said:

"My dear chap, I believe you're quite a master of calculus. Tell me—how would you divide six sardines into 23 equal pieces?"

The solution required no resort to higher mathematics. The various ingredients were combined into a sort of lettuceless salad, the mixture was chopped up, and then divided.

This was not the only time that the mathematical wizards of the French Army bent their energies to solving similar problems. There was one Saturday on which the canteen keeper returned with a sausage about six inches long, flatteringly referred to as liverwurst. Actually it was made of whale grease and synthetic meat, but the half-starved generals were not particular.

The first operation was to score the surface of the sausage carefully into equal parts; but just as the cutting was about to begin, one of the officers objected:

“The blade of that knife is so thick, that you’re never going to get the slices equal.”

“Probably not,” said the man at the knife, “but what can we do about it?”

“Let’s draw lots to see who gets the bigger pieces. That’s the fairest.”

So some of the highest officers in the French Army sat in rapt attention before a small piece of ersatz sausage, while lots were drawn solemnly after every second slice—of the two generals whose turn came next, the winner took first choice of the two cut slices, and the loser got the other.

The orderlies, as might have been expected, for we were both younger and accustomed to doing with less, resisted the bad food situation better than the generals. Nevertheless we had problems of our own, which we tried to solve in various ways, some more successful than others. For instance, there were considerable clumps of nettles growing about the grounds, which we gathered, cooked and ate, attempting meanwhile to make ourselves believe they were as good as spinach. It took imagination.

Amateur herbiculturists flourished among us, and we had many a lively discussion as to what weeds or wild flowers growing on our hill-top were edible. There were also a few experiments, most of them unfortunate.

One of our happier achievements was with snails, though even this was no epicure’s delight. We came across a few and immediately

captured them. They weren't like the tasty Burgundy snails which are eaten in France, but were ordinary garden snails with different colored shells. But to us, a snail was a snail, and we were prepared not to be too fussy about the quality.

The first question was how to cook them. We had no garlic, much less butter, to make the sauce with which they are usually cooked in their shells. We could think of no substitute, until one of our number, who had lived for some time in Brussels, told us that in Belgium snails were taken out of their shells, boiled in water seasoned with salt and pepper, and sold in that form in the streets. Salt and pepper we did have, and we proceeded at once to prepare to cook the snails.

It was at this point that Renier intervened, and contributed a little more culinary lore.

"You mustn't cook them right away," he explained. "Snails have to be kept without being permitted to eat for a week or more before they can be cooked. That's the only way you can clean a snail. He has to do it for you."

So we built a little box for our snails, watching them hungrily through a small peephole in the top, like cannibals waiting for a victim to fatten. On the following Sunday, we cooked our snails with great expectations. Every one was loud in their praise, but personally I was glad there weren't very many of them.

I recalled with regret now the days when, as a penniless young student in the Quartier Latin, I had often lived for weeks at a time on peanuts and chocolate, being without enough money to buy a regular meal. At that time, I thought it quite a hardship; but in Königstein, I remembered that diet with envy. At least, I had always had something in my stomach; and both peanuts and chocolate had a pleasant taste, even though they weren't what I wanted for a steady diet.

When General Dubert finally returned to Königstein, I was anxious to know what, if anything, he had found out; but not for a day or so did I have a chance to get some information. Then it was General Verger who told me the result.

"Kiewitz is dead," he said, "and Dubert thinks there is no doubt that the Germans killed him. He was in excellent health when he

left here. I played chess with him often, and I have heard him remark how fortunate he was in having a strong constitution, which could support the bad food here without too much trouble.

“Dubert was sent to the hospital at Dresden, which, it appears, is where any of us who are taken seriously ill will go. He asked about Kiewitz. He thought it was natural enough that he should make a direct inquiry, for, of course, that would be a likely enough thing for any one coming from the same place to do. He was told that Kiewitz had suffered a fatal heart attack shortly after his arrival. Dubert thought this might be a lie, so he expressed great sorrow, and said he would like to visit his grave. The next day he was taken under guard to a local cemetery, and sure enough, there was a wooden cross bearing Kiewitz’s name. Dubert was willing to believe that Kiewitz was dead—there didn’t, after all, seem to be any reason why they should say so, if he wasn’t—but he still doubted strongly that the death was a natural one.

“By discreet questioning, and keeping his ears open, he learned that Kiewitz had been taken to a department of the hospital referred to by the employees only as ‘the special section.’ After a few days, during which the doctors had failed to improve his asthma (which was not surprising, since it hadn’t responded particularly to medical treatment for a matter of years), Dubert said to his nurse one day: ‘I’ve heard a special section of this hospital mentioned by the employees. What is that—an experimental department or a division for particularly difficult cases? Do they perhaps have any specialists there who might be able to do more for me than the regular doctors?’ The nurse, who was an Austrian, looked at him with an expression of horror in her face. Then, after turning to make sure that no one was within hearing distance, she bent over the bed, and whispered: ‘Herr General, I beg of you, never mention the special section again. Do not let any one know you have heard of it.’

“‘But why?’ Dubert insisted. ‘What’s all the mystery about?’ He judged by her expression and obvious fright that he had hit on the secret. The nurse leaned over his bed again, as though tucking in his clothes, and said: ‘Herr General, I advise you—try to persuade them to send you back to Königstein—especially if you are going to talk about the special section—or they may take you in there.’ She looked

back over her shoulder again, then whispered so softly that Dubert had difficulty hearing: 'The special section is operated by the Gestapo. There—that's all I can tell you.'

"That was enough for Dubert. At his doctor's next round, he told him that as there seemed no likelihood of his improvement, he would like to be returned to Königstein. So that's all we know. No definite proof, of course—but I can't believe that Kiewitz, who appeared to be in perfect health, and who seemed to have been taken to the hospital against his will, died so conveniently as soon as he arrived there. It's no very difficult trick, you know, to produce an embolus in the blood stream—and you can call that a heart attack."

And he added:

"So, Lambert, if you hear one of these days that one of us has been taken to the hospital at Dresden against his will, you know what to expect."

XXV

Ingenuity

MY ADMIRAL was very much distressed by the news of Kiewitz's death. He was in any case in a rather depressed and nervous state. He had received no word from his wife for some time, and therefore, of course, no answer to the message he had sent her by Savignon. He was not only worried about his wife, but restless because his plans for escape were not progressing, and there seemed nothing more that could be done for the moment from the inside. Rensac felt the same way, but Verger, though also without news from his wife, managed to take the situation more philosophically.

Ever since the unmasking of Darceau, the only hope of the three men had been pinned on Pecquot, and hearing nothing more about him, after the first faint glimmering had been stirred, was almost worse than having no plan at all. Nothing had been heard of Darceau, either, and that disturbed Rensac, who was fond of him.

Meanwhile Gaston had received an answer from his wife, which made it seem even odder that the Admiral, who had sent his message so much earlier, had received no mail. The latest report to Gaston went like this:

"Juliette has confided everything to me. She is a fine woman; I am afraid I suspected her unjustly. She really loves her husband dearly, and has only been seeing Lebalafre for his sake. She tells me she despises him, and imagines her husband must, too."

"It sounds as though Tellier has been airing his new ideas to Mme. Verger," I said. "I don't imagine she would relish them. I wonder what she means exactly—seeing him for her husband's sake? When he first returned, I suppose it might have been that she wanted to know all she could about her husband's present mode of life. But if

she is still seeing him, although she knows now what kind he is, what can her reason be? Evidently, she hopes to do something for her husband—but I can't imagine what it could be."

"Now that we know everything is all right," Gaston said, "shouldn't I show this letter to the General?"

"I don't think so," I said. "If you show him the second, you'll have to show him the first. You know how it is—most people believe that where there's smoke there must be some fire, and he may put more stock in the first letter than in the second. There actually isn't too much information in this letter either. I'd favor not bothering him unless your wife tells us something later which sounds more useful."

Gaston looked unconvinced.

"But my wife would hardly be writing me all this unless she wanted me to tell the General," he said. "You see, she says here that Mme. Verger told her all about this. Perhaps it was she who wanted the General to know about it."

"I tell you what to do," I said. "Let me show both these letters to Admiral Beaulieu. We can ask his advice."

On my next visit to the Admiral, I set the phonograph going at once, a familiar signal that I had something to say which made him ask at once:

"What's the matter, Lambert? Anything wrong?"

I started to explain about Gaston's two letters, but he interrupted me excitedly:

"Lambert, this is very important—how important you don't realize. Quick, get those letters from Gaston. I must see them at once!"

"I brought them with me, sir," I said, handing them over.

"Good, good," the Admiral murmured, as he scanned the letters. When he looked up, I hurriedly told him the rest of the story, and explained that I had wanted to ask him if they should be shown to General Verger, whom I had feared they might only upset.

"No, no, Lambert," the Admiral said. "On the contrary, Verger must see them at once. They are highly important in connection with something General Günther told him not half an hour ago. I haven't time to explain now, but don't go away until I come back. I'll put you *au courant* then."

And he dashed off to find Verger.

Left alone in the Admiral's room, I looked idly through the few books he had accumulated during his stay there, mostly sent to him by his wife, at his request. The Germans admitted any work they considered of no political importance. Among the books thus favored, I noticed, were several volumes of Anatole France and a volume of letters by Charles Péguy. The latter was unfamiliar to me, and I thumbed through it. It opened at a page where the Admiral had marked a passage in pencil in the margin—written by Péguy only a few months before he was killed at the front in 1914.

"In wartime, he who does not yield is my man, whoever he may be, wherever he comes from, whatever his party. He does not yield: that is all that is asked of him. And he who yields is my enemy, whoever he may be, wherever he comes from, whatever his party. And I hate him all the more if, through political relationships, he claims kinship with me."

If the German censor had read that passage would he, I wondered, have let the book through? Some day, I thought, I must ask the Admiral if he had showed this marked passage to any of the collaborationists.

A moment later the Admiral returned, and told me why the letters of Gaston's wife had excited him so much.

It seemed that on this very morning, Günther had sent word to Verger inviting him to come to his apartment. Verger stiffly returned the message that as a French officer he could not call on an enemy officer. Shortly afterwards, Günther himself appeared in Verger's room. He began with a few vague remarks about collaboration, to which Verger answered, "I believe you already know my views on that subject, General. If it was only for that that you came, you really needn't have taken the trouble."

"It wasn't for that alone," Günther said. "I did have something else to speak to you about." He was silent for a moment, as though considering how to put what he had to say. Then he went on: "I notice you haven't received any letters from Mme. Verger lately. Doesn't that strike you as rather odd?"

Verger returned frigidly: "I know I have received none. I do not know that she has written none."

Günther flushed slightly, but ignored the insinuation.

"I have no doubt you would be very happy if it became possible for you to see your wife soon," Günther continued.

"Naturally," Verger said, "but under present circumstances, I see little likelihood of that."

He expected Günther to follow up his opening with another appeal to accept collaboration, baited by the reminder that this would permit him to rejoin his wife. He was prepared to express his surprise that Günther should expect him to permit such personal considerations to lead him to betray his principles. But he was not prepared to answer the question which Günther actually put to him.

"Do you know that General Tellier is seeing a great deal of your wife in Marseilles?" Günther asked.

The unexpectedness of the question startled Verger, but he managed to maintain a calm expression—or so he thought. "Why shouldn't he?" he asked. "He's an old friend of the family."

"I am happy to see that you consider it so unimportant, General," Günther said oilily, as he drew a number of photographs from his pocket. He looked through them slowly, as though he were deliberately trying to increase Verger's curiosity. "I had the impression that there had been rather less friendliness between you and General Tellier recently," he continued. He drew one of the photos from the pack, and tossed it face up on the table in front of Verger.

It showed Tellier and Mme. Verger sitting on a restaurant terrace. They seemed to be in animated conversation, and Mme. Verger, smiling up at General Tellier, certainly gave no evidence of being depressed.

"I have a number of others which might interest you," General Günther said.

"I hardly think they would," Verger answered curtly.

Günther shrugged his shoulders and returned the photographs to his pocket.

"It seems a shame, General," he said slowly, "that your obstinacy in refusing to see reason prevents you from enjoying the society of your wife, while your colleague, who appreciates the force of our arguments, is quite free to do so. Are you sure that a mistaken conception of patriotism has not caused you to remain standing still while events have passed by you? Your countrymen are by no means

in unanimous agreement with you. As you see, your own wife does not seem to hold it against General Tellier that he accepted the situation realistically. If she did, would she see him every day—as I am informed she does?

"There is no reason in the world, General, why you should not be released to return to your family. It depends only upon yourself, on your willingness to recognize that times have changed, that you will be best protecting the interests of France as well as those of your own family by accepting the New Order, and resuming your place in the national life of France within its framework. . . . It is not good for women to be left alone by their husbands for too long, General. That's an old story, which you understand as well as I do. You would do your wife a great service as well as yourself if you would only make it possible for me to recommend that you be allowed to return to France to rejoin her."

Verger rose.

"General Günther," he said, "I have complete trust in my wife's ability to take care of herself, and I am quite sure she would approve my reasons in continuing to refuse to accept my freedom on the conditions you propose. Good day."

"But although he maintained this attitude before Günther," the Admiral told me, "Verger was actually terribly shaken—and quite naturally, too. What he said to Günther was true enough. He *has* great confidence in his wife. But I doubt if any man would be completely immune to the effects of the seeds of doubt which Günther planted in his mind. . . . After all, you know, there's something in what he said. A woman's like a ship—she can't navigate very long without a helmsman. Verger is a man of the world. He doesn't expect the impossible, even from his wife. He has to admit to himself that she must be lonely, and that being lonely, she might be weak.

"What he really thinks, though, is that this is just one more German trick, and that he shouldn't worry about his wife. But from that point of view, it seems to bother him almost as much that Tellier should have lent himself to such a rôle. In spite of their recent violent arguments, Verger hasn't been able to forget that he and Tellier have been close friends for years. He realizes that Tellier might be serving the Germans unwittingly—but he at least must have gotten Mme.

Verger's address from them, for Verger says he didn't give it to Tellier. The Germans got it, of course, from her letters.

"Incidentally, Verger is convinced—and I am, too—that the reason he hasn't heard from his wife is that Günther has held her letters.

"Now you see why it was so important to show Verger those letters immediately. They relieved him considerably. He believes the second one was probably written at his wife's direction, since she no doubt realized that the orderlies' letters were less closely inspected than those of the generals. The reassurance it contained was all he needed to regain his full courage.

"Curious how far these Germans will go," the Admiral mused, "to gain ascendancy over a single person. For people who deny the importance of the individual, they certainly go to great pains over some of them. Particularly over holdouts like Rensac and Verger—they seem to put greater value on corrupting them than they do on their victories over those who gave way easily. The parable of the ninety-and-nine, I suppose, in reverse. It's odd—Rensac and Verger could get out of here in a moment, if they simply said the word; but of the twenty or more officers here who have been ready to play the German game from the beginning, only two have been released! . . . You have to give the Boches credit for ingenuity. Their minds must work in a special way to suggest such ideas to them,"

XXVI

Christmas

It was shortly before Christmas that General Günther issued a new and unwelcome order. We were told that all the orderlies must learn to speak German, and that lessons would be given us by no less a person than Lieutenant Greffe himself. It was a little late for me to admit that I spoke German, so I resigned myself to taking the lessons like every one else. But we agreed among ourselves that the Germans were not going to find it easy to force their language on us.

We made no open objections, which, of course, would have done us no good, but we agreed among ourselves that we would outdo each other in stupidity. We proceeded to drive Greffe slowly crazy by our thick-headedness. We confused the simplest words, said *Schiff* when we meant *Tisch*, and *heraus* for *Haus*, and invented entirely new grammatical combinations. Our pronunciation was impossible, and we saw to it that it didn't improve. The four of us who understood German were the best at this game, because we knew more German to distort.

Almost ready to give up in despair, Greffe thought of a new idea. He would teach us to sing German folk songs, in the hope of leading us into the language that way. It was a bad idea. It gave us something more to work on. Now we could not only speak badly, we could sing badly too. Our first attempt resulted in cacophony so dreadful that Greffe howled us down (with some difficulty, as we pretended to be singing too whole-heartedly to hear him), and ended the session in a burst of profanity.

Back in the casemate, after establishing the usual safety zone by our alternative microphonic connections, we let ourselves go, and roared with laughter at our success.

"How do you all manage to keep such straight faces?" Renier demanded. "It was all I could do to keep from exploding. You all looked as solemn as judges. You especially, Gaston. You couldn't have been more serious if you had been giving an audition for the opera."

"Well, now, I'll tell you how I do it," Gaston replied. "It's very simple. You try it, too. To keep from laughing, I think of something sad. Today, for instance, I kept thinking how terrible it would be if poor Lieutenant Greffe should die of apoplexy before our eyes. That almost brought me to tears."

Greffe was stubborn, and the next day he started us on another song. This song he had picked was *Ich hatt' einen Kameraden*. In the hope of controlling our tunelessness, he had taken us into a room of the castle where there was a piano, and had brought along a German corporal to play it. After an introductory struggle with the attempt to teach us the words, he motioned to the corporal to begin, and with the first few notes from the piano, we broke into a din that would have frightened away all the devils of Dante's inferno.

I was shouting away at the top of my lungs, with the rest, when I suddenly realized that Renier, standing alongside of me, was actually singing a recognizable air. But it wasn't *I Had a Comrade*. It was *La Marseillaise*. I joined him, and others chimed in. At first Greffe didn't notice what was going on, for the tuneless shouting of the others drowned us out, but as they realized one by one what we were singing and joined us, there suddenly emerged out of the formless unmusical uproar the stirring melody of the *Marseillaise*. Carried away by the familiar strains, we forgot for an instant where we were and what we were doing. In a common *élan*, we sang at the top of our lungs, completely drowning out the pianist, who strove vainly to outplay us.

Red in the face, Greffe began shouting at us, but we had drowned his voice out, too; and we shouted defiantly, filled with a sudden gust of freedom, "*contre nous de la tyrannie, l'étendard sanglant est levé.*" We sang it to the end, and only then could we hear Greffe, bellowing madly: "*Genug! Aufhören! Rentrez tout de suite dans les dortoirs!*"

The clamor had brought guards running to the spot, and it was

under guard that we were marched back to the casemate and locked in behind the heavy iron doors an hour earlier than usual. We were all in high spirits, careless of what punishment might be meted out to us. Besides, it was Christmas Eve. We were in holiday mood.

We had set up in one corner of our dormitory a "Christmas tree." Actually, it was only a large branch which had fallen from one of the trees, which we had picked up in the courtyard. We proceeded to "decorate" it, a process which we achieved, in the absence of candles, tinsel or ornaments, by draping odds and ends of colored bits of paper and rags, cut into weird shapes, over it. We gathered around our tree and began to swap stories—hair-raisers, mostly, the kind people tell on winter nights in the country, when the wind is howling about the house and the fire roars in the chimney. We were from all parts of France, and most of the stories we told were known only to the teller and perhaps one or two others from his own region. It was one of the happiest evenings we had spent together since our imprisonment. We thought it probable that we would be punished in some way on the morrow for our demonstration, but we didn't care. We didn't even bother to set up a safety zone.

When we woke in the morning at five, we found the doors still locked. Since it was Christmas, our theory was that the usual morning drill was being omitted, and that today the doors would be opened at 7, when it was time to serve breakfast.

But we were wrong. About 5:30 the *Feldwebel* appeared, flanked by two guards. He read us a curt order stating that we were to be confined to our quarters until further notice.

"Who is going to take care of our officers?" one of us piped up.

"They will take care of themselves," the *Feldwebel* answered curtly. He went out, and the doors were slammed and locked again.

At 7 we assumed that we would be let out to get breakfast. But the doors remained locked and no one came near us. Not until noon did any one appear. Then two guards selected four of us to get the rations for every one in the room, and marched them off, returning a little later. The doors were locked once more, and we faced the prospect of passing the rest of the day in an inactivity which was already beginning to wear on us.

I was particularly annoyed myself because I had planned to give

the Admiral a Christmas gift—a thought which, I had no doubt, would surprise him, in the circumstances. It happened that a volume of the poems of André Chénier had been sent me from home, and I had saved it for the Admiral, whom I knew to be an admirer of Chénier.

For a few minutes after lunch, we sat about, speechless and morose, on our beds. We soon thought of a way to pass Christmas more cheerfully. There had been a distribution of mail the day before, and we decided to read one another any passages of general interest from our letters. A safety zone was quickly set up, and we prepared to compare notes.

I had always known that most of the orderlies managed to get some news from outside through their letters, for of course we had told each other the odds and ends of information we obtained. But what interested me in this general comparison was the ingenuity of expression used to get ideas through the censorship, and the unanimity with which all of our families had seized upon the same methods of writing their letters between the lines.

Among the expressions used to mean the British were "our neighbors," "Cousin Angela" (in a letter to a man who had no relative of that name), and "Edouard's children," an allusion to Edward VII, the English king best known in France. With a little difficulty, one of the orderlies figured out that a Monsieur Georgil, mentioned frequently in one letter, was a French phonetic (more or less) transcription of "Churchill."

Germans turned up in various letters as "Monsieur Bocher" (from Boche, of course); "friends of Ferdon" (meaning Ferdonnet, the "traitor of Stuttgart," who broadcast to France from Germany during the war), and under other disguises.

Some of them used more complicated improvised codes, intelligible only through special information possessed by writer and recipient. For instance, one of our number, who had been a clerk in a wine company, for which his wife had worked as a typist, had been charged with correspondence with the London and New York representatives of the company, named Turner and Cabot respectively. So when his wife wrote that "every one is happy to learn that Turner and Cabot are likely to enter into a partnership soon," he was able

to interpret the letter as meaning that America was expected to come into the war.

This comparison of our letters enabled us to notice what appeared to be certain general tendencies in opinion. For instance, distrust of Pétain appeared to be increasing. One letter spoke of "*Oncle Philippe qui se fait vieux et gaga*" (Uncle Philippe is in his second childhood), and another one referred to him as "the old liar." And from the number of references to resistance to the occupiers, we judged that sabotage must be increasing considerably.

We were not disturbed in our letter reading by any summons to an evening meal. Apparently it had been decided that we were being well enough treated, after our show of independence, if we were given our meager rations once a day. We went to bed even hungrier than usual: expecting, since we had been told that we were to be confined to our quarters until further orders, to spend the next day in the same fashion.

But the next morning we were aroused at the usual hour. At the morning drill, the sergeant acted as though nothing had happened. I delivered my Christmas present, one day late, to the Admiral with his morning beverage, and learned that action by our officers had ended our punishment. They had filed a protest with General Günther, noting first that there was nothing criminal in the singing of the French national anthem by Frenchmen, and second, that they had been deprived through our confinement of the service to which they were entitled by international agreement. Günther had therefore ordered that the punishment be restricted to twenty-four hours.

For the first time since he had sent out the code by Savignon, Admiral Beaulieu received a letter from his wife. The postmark showed that it had been held more than two weeks before being handed over to him. In the light of the attempt to apply pressure on Verger through his wife, Beaulieu wondered if perhaps his own mail hadn't been held up also with some similar purpose in mind; but if so, the plan was never put into execution. Perhaps its failure in the case of Verger had determined the Germans not to have recourse to it again.

The letter was, on the face of it, such an affectionate note as might

normally have been expected from a wife writing to her husband under the circumstances which existed. But at the first glance, the Admiral saw that it contained several of the code words he had given to Savignon: and he set work at once to decipher it.

The information it provided was that Pecquot had gone to Switzerland, and had succeeded in locating Maria Günther.

"Three weeks old!" the Admiral exclaimed, jumping up and pacing back and forth in time to the strains of *Ach! du lieber Augustin*, which the phonograph was blaring away, "The letter is dated three weeks ago! Anything may have happened in the meantime! Pecquot isn't the man to let things drag along for nearly a whole month, simply because he hasn't heard from us. He must certainly have reached some conclusion. But what? Frankly, Lambert, I would rather have known nothing at all than just this much. It's enough to arouse hopes, but not to satisfy them."

"If he saw Mme. Günther three weeks ago, I'm surprised nothing has happened yet," I said.

"The chances are that nothing's going to happen," the Admiral returned. "We might as well face that fact. She was probably unwilling to help. Why should she? It would mean a risk for her, and why should she let herself in for any trouble—against her own husband, too?"

There was, in any case, nothing we could do—nothing but wait. Our forced inactivity was all the more onerous since the garden, exposed to all the forces of the wintry winds which whistled incessantly about our lofty perch, was no longer a possible gathering place. The generals had to stay indoors. Verger and Rensac spent most of their time in the Admiral's room, while the phonograph played all day long, repeating over and over the hoarse notes of a worn and cracked record. It must have driven mad any poor soldier compelled to remain at the listening post.

Answering his wife's letter, the Admiral gave her the address of Mme. Verger in Marseilles, and suggested that she might look her up, if it were possible for her to visit the unoccupied zone. He included in the message one of the code words which signified that this was an important request. The Admiral actually didn't think it likely that his wife could get to Marseilles, but since Pecquot was

apparently able to move about freely, he thought that this hint might lead to a visit on his part to Mme. Verger, who could then be initiated into the secret of the code, and could perhaps report what Tellier was up to.

Verger at the same time asked Gaston to include in his next letter to his wife the phrase: "*Juliette doit être contente, maintenant qu'elle verra de si beaux lieux. J'espère qu'elle sera confiante.*"

This line didn't have much meaning in itself: "Juliette should be satisfied, now that she is going to see such beautiful places. I hope she will be trustful."

Verger hoped that the very obscurity of this phrase would cause his wife to puzzle over it, looking for a hidden meaning, so that it would stick in her memory. Then when she met Mme. Beaulieu or some one sent by her, she would remember the pun on the words "*beaux lieux*" (beautiful places), and realize that her husband had told her she could put full trust in Mme. Beaulieu.

Verger thought this would help, for he assumed that his wife might be suspicious of strangers, particularly if, as he believed, she was cultivating Tellier because she suspected his motives also, old friend though he was. He also thought it possible that she might be seeing Tellier with some idea of her own for helping an escape—and in that case, it seemed that any efforts she might be making would be all the more effective if they were coordinated with whatever the others might prove able to do.

XXVII

A Personal Gift

ABOUT THE middle of January, the generals received good news—the new warm uniforms, so long promised them, would arrive in a few days. It appeared that quite an occasion was to be made of their appearance. They were, it seemed, a “personal gift from Marshal Pétain,” and a special mission from Vichy was bringing them.

The uniforms were welcome to all, but sentiment about the manner of their coming was divided. The most uncompromising of the generals opined that the Marshal had taken long enough about it, and suggested that the way in which they were finally being provided smacked of pro-Vichy propaganda.

But what interested them more than anything else was the question of whether or not they would be permitted to talk with the members of the French mission. They were thirsty for news from France. The morsels of information smuggled in by means of allusions unlikely to be understood by the censors were only sufficient to whet their appetites for more.

General Verger snorted that any news brought by men sent by the government of Vichy would have to be taken with a good deal more than the proverbial grain of salt. But General de Rensac, though willing to admit that the men who would visit us would of course be collaborationists, still felt that fellow French officers could be trusted to give the prisoners accurate reports.

General Dubert was one of those who showed the greatest suspicion of the coming visitation from Vichy. He had evolved considerably in this direction since his arrival at Königstein. The chief reason for this development appeared to be his own discovery of the fate of General Kiewitz, which had shocked him profoundly, and made him

a bitter and unrelenting enemy of the Germans. He felt so strongly about a people which could use such methods that he began to erect on his horror of them a plan for a new order of his own, of a type quite different from that which the Nazis preached—different, to begin with, because it allowed no place at all in the new world he visioned for Germans of the type who had been able to murder the Polish general in cold blood. He had become more talkative, and frequently expounded his ideas to his fellow-officers, some of whom found them rather surprising, not to say extreme.

"I have always refused to believe in evil," he said once to Admiral Beaulieu. "I have always believed that certain qualities, in races or in individuals, had their good and their bad sides, and that unmixed badness was as impossible as unmixed goodness. But now, for the first time in my life, I have been confronted with evil, in its pure unadulterated essence. It frightens me. I see nothing that can be done, for our own survival, except to stamp it remorselessly out.

"Even after the war began, I looked upon our enemies as human beings like ourselves, caught up unwittingly and unwillingly in the political oppositions that brought about the war. I am a soldier, and I did not allow that concept to prevent me from fighting with all my ardor; but I am a thinking man also, and I fought to keep myself from hating the individuals who made up the army against which I was pitted.

"I feel differently today. I have learned things and seen things which have changed my point of view. I am not so stupid as to believe even now that we are all angels, and that they are all devils; but I do believe that their energies have been enlisted in the cause of the devils—in the service of evil, if you like that better.

"I wonder if they even think in the same terms we do? It seems that their approach to life, their whole outlook, their philosophy—perhaps it would be better to say their religion—is entirely different from ours. Something became distorted somewhere in their thinking, centuries ago, perhaps, and they began evolving in a different direction from us so long ago that today they are living in a different world with different values, and everything we believe in they would tear down.

"Today I can't help hating all that they stand for—for that matter,

I hardly try. Is that a sin? I don't know, but I don't think so. It should be no sin to hate evil. We are told to love our enemies, but we are not told to love the evil that they do. I still do not hate the men themselves, the individuals—but it is the sinister force that moves through them that I hate. They are instruments of it—unconscious instruments perhaps, but if there is no other way to destroy the evil that they serve except by destroying its instruments, then let us destroy the instruments.

"I used to believe that Christian patience and understanding could vanquish what was bad in any man. But now I doubt that. To save a soul, you must be able to get to it. And how can we reach it, if it does not understand the language that we speak? I don't mean, you see, so unimportant a difference as that which exists between French and German. I mean the difference which exists in basic ideas, fundamental conceptions, so far apart that they cannot comprehend one another. It goes even deeper than Nazi ideology. That is an artificial overlay, and I feel one can scratch that away and go deeper. But then one finds beneath it, in the German soul, a horrible incomprehensible worship of blood and violence and death which made it possible for Nazism to fasten itself upon Germany."

"How did you, so thorough a Christian, and so charitable a person towards your enemies, ever come to such conclusions?" Beaulieu asked.

"I can't explain in detail," Dubert said. "There was a gradual accumulation of evidence; and at what point it became great enough to prepare me for my new conviction, I don't quite know. But I do know when the cup brimmed over. That was when I learned about Kiewitz. I can't prove they killed him—but I know they did. For me, there is not the slightest doubt about that. I know it from the manner in which they spoke to me, from the way the nurse talked, from the way the others lied. I know they killed him in cold blood—and that marks the difference between us. To us, it is revolting to dispose of human life in that way. We may kill in the heat of battle, in defense of ourselves, or our homes, or our ideals—but we do not kill men in hospital beds because they disagree with us. They put human beings out of the way with as little compunction as if they were

cattle. Their souls must vibrate on another mode than ours. The cry of despair does not touch their hearts. Are they all like that in the mass, though they seem so different, and so much more like us when they are taken alone? And if they are not all servants of evil, why do they submit to those who are? Why do they let themselves be used by these forces?"

Thrilling news reached us through the prison grapevine: the mission from Vichy had arrived, and had put up at the *Gastwirtschaft* of the village, the Hotel Königstein. Hardly had this news been received, than one of the orderlies dashed up to say that he had seen three French officers, accompanied by a German officer, entering the commander's office. The next bulletin was that the mission was headed by a Colonel Gabriel, who had asked permission to present his respects to General de Rensac, as the ranking French officer in the camp.

When General Verger heard the name of the head of the mission, he commented:

"Perhaps I will have to take back what I said about any mission sent by Vichy. I know Colonel Gabriel well. He served under me for several years. He may be working for Vichy, but I'm sure he's all right."

The Germans, who perhaps knew him less well, seemed to share that opinion. Probably they assumed that any one sent by Vichy would be trustworthy—from their point of view, of course. They answered to Gabriel's request that he was free to call on any of the imprisoned officers.

Gabriel therefore seized the opportunity to talk to a number of the generals, including Rensac and Verger. I did not see him myself, but I got at second-hand the impressions which he left with General Verger.

"In this little closed universe of ours," Verger said to me, "it is almost impossible for us to realize how things look to our countrymen in France. The glimpses of France I got from my talk with Gabriel gave me a curious feeling of unreality. He seemed to be talking about some other country than the France we knew. He

knew nothing of the situation in occupied France—he hasn't been there, except to pass through on his way here—but his description of Vichy France is not at all what I would have expected.

"We have been defeated in a war, and it would seem natural that our leaders would feel themselves humiliated and oppressed, that they would set themselves sternly and with determination to the task of forging up again to redeem themselves. But although it seems that Marshal Pétain has made one or two *mea culpa* speeches of highly insincere flavor, and although there has been a little window dressing in the way of a program for 'national rejuvenation' which seems to have a strong Fascist tinge, the men of Vichy actually feel quite triumphant about the whole development. One would think that they had won the war! The defeat of France is only incidental to them; and they are jubilant because, by means of it, they have been able to set up the reactionary régime they always desired, but couldn't achieve when Frenchmen were free. The price of being puppets, boot-lickers, lackeys of the enemy apparently seems reasonable enough to them. They are on top, they are in power (what power is left them by the Nazis). That seems to be enough for them. The country can go to the devil. . . . From what Gabriel tells me, I should say the pickings are good for those who swim on top of the scum. It's not so ill a wind that it isn't blowing any one any good."

"Do you think, *mon général*, that they are simply profiteers?" I asked. "You said that they seem to feel that they have won the war. Do you suppose they contributed in any way to what happened, instead of simply benefiting by it after it had occurred? You remember how odd some of the retreat orders given us seemed to be, how badly we were supported, and how much trouble we had getting supplies. Was it all accidental, do you think?"

"How can I tell from here, Lambert?" Verger answered. "I have no means of knowing what caused our defeat—and I prefer not to entertain such ideas, unless and until they are forced upon me. I know that Gabriel, who is an honest man, seems to be disgusted with what is going on at Vichy; yet he's very reserved in what he says. Indeed, if he didn't know me so well, I'm sure he wouldn't have gone as far as he did. He acts like a man who is afraid to put into words what he suspects, for fear he will convince himself. He salves

his conscience now by reminding himself that he is a professional soldier, whose duty is to follow the orders of his superiors whether he is in sympathy with them or not. Of course, I would answer to that that the Vichy leaders are not his rightful superiors, since they gained their power by a sort of *coup d'état*; but what is the use of disturbing his conscience further?

"Some of Gabriel's prudence may be the natural result of a few months in the atmosphere of Vichy. He tells me that police spies are everywhere, that every one suspects his neighbor, and that conversations in public places are rarely carried on above a whisper. It is hard to imagine such an atmosphere in our country, where every one has always expressed his opinions as outspokenly and as freely as he pleased. I wonder how such a spectacle impresses the little people—the farmers, the workers, the *Français moyens*, with their clear common sense and their love of freedom?"

When the officers inspected the uniforms which had been sent them, so they were told, as a personal gift of the Marshal, they did not appear particularly overcome by the thoughtfulness of their chief. If it had been expected that the Vichy régime would reap favorable propaganda from this manifestation of Pétain's generosity, that expectation must have been disappointed. The uniforms turned out to be, not officers' uniforms, but ordinary privates' uniforms, and exceptionally badly cut from poor cloth at that.

However most of the generals' clothes were by now in rather bad state, and the new uniforms were at least of heavy cloth. The generals put them on, rather unhappily. Those whose summer uniforms were too badly worn for further use had their stars transferred to the new costumes. The others, anxious to return to their light uniforms as soon as the weather would permit, didn't want to damage them by removing the stars, and so for them we repeated the device of manufacturing stars out of sardine tins. The effect wasn't too bad—at a distance.

XXVIII

"None Shall Help Him"

THE EVENING of Colonel Gabriel's visit, we received a caller in the orderlies' casemate also. He was a young non-commissioned officer, who had arrived with the mission, and who described himself as an Alsatian named Ritter. For some undefinable reason, I mistrusted him at once. He seemed a little too anxious to make friends with us quickly, and a little too quick to make anti-German remarks. His attitude was in direct contradiction to the reserve which a few months under the Vichy régime had imposed upon Colonel Gabriel, for whose patriotism General Verger nevertheless vouched. I couldn't help feeling that Ritter's words were insincere, that he was playing a part, that he was setting out deliberately to win our confidence. It was for that reason that he didn't get mine.

I may have mistrusted him partly because I thought it odd that the Germans should have allowed any one to visit us at all. My feelings didn't seem to be shared by my comrades. They received the visitor from France with glee. Anxious to get the latest news from him, they conducted him at once to our "safety zone." I was as curious as they, and I joined the group which formed about him, but when Gaston began to say something which I realized was going to be a joking reference to our trick to fool the microphones, I nudged him sharply with my elbow. He gave me a look which seemed to say: "Don't be silly! He's a Frenchman like us!" but he did change the subject, which was all I wanted.

Before leaving, Ritter said: "Look—do any of you want to write any letters home? I could take them along with me when I go. For once, you won't have to worry about the censor."

A chorus of whoops of delight greeted this suggestion, and half a dozen orderlies called out at once that they would like to give Ritter

notes for their families. He told them he would manage to come in again before the mission left, and for them to have ready whatever they wanted to send with him. Then he took his leave.

When he had gone, I told my friends that I was not going to trust any letters to Ritter, and that I advised them to do the same.

"He may be all right," I said, "but I'm not taking any chances. He rubs me the wrong way. There's something that isn't straightforward about him. He may be an Alsatian, or he may be one of those fake Alsations we saw so much of during the war. That was the favorite dodge of the Fifth Columnists, to pass themselves off for Alsations when they were really German."

Bonnot, General Dubert's orderly, cried: "Oh, you're too suspicious, Lambert. He seems to be a good sort. Besides, what would we have to say important enough for the Germans to want to set a trap for us?"

"We were important enough for them to put microphones in our dormitories," I said. "But that isn't the only thing. Suppose he is all right, but the Germans search him before they let him go? That would be just as bad for us as if he really were working for the Germans. We'd be caught either way, and we'd get him into trouble as well as ourselves. You others can do what you want, but I'm not giving him anything."

My words seemed to cause several of the others to change their minds. Ritter came in the following day to say good-bye. He was given a few letters, but not nearly as many handed him notes as had said they would the preceding day.

At two in the afternoon, the Vichy mission took its departure. Some time later I went to Admiral Beaulieu's room.

"Good news, Lambert!" he said to me. "We've heard from Pecquot!"

"You got an answer to your last letter then, sir?" I asked.

"No," Beaulieu said. "Gabriel gave me a message."

It seemed that Gabriel had asked General Verger to present him to Admiral Beaulieu, and after the introduction, had said: "I wanted to meet you, Admiral, because I have heard a great deal about you from a mutual friend, who is much interested in your welfare."

"Indeed," Beaulieu answered. "Who is that?"

"Captain de Pecquot," Gabriel returned. "He served under you, I believe. He's a fine chap. I've known him for years. He seems to be quite devoted to you."

"He's an old friend of mine as well," Beaulieu said, "or rather, his whole family is. His father was a constant visitor at my home. How is he? And what is he doing these days?"

"What I was trying to do," the Admiral explained to me, "was to give Gabriel a chance to deliver a message from Pecquot. I assumed that he had asked to see me and then had brought up Pecquot's name because he had something to report. I suppose it was because I had been waiting so impatiently for some result from Pecquot's trip to Switzerland that I jumped to the conclusion that Gabriel was in on the secret, and that perhaps an escape attempt was to be tried in connection with his visit. Hope carried me a little too far. I did my best to indicate that he might speak freely, but I was careful not to commit myself, in case he wasn't *au courant*; and in a few minutes I was glad that I hadn't, for it developed that he had simply met Pecquot for a few minutes in Vichy, and that Pecquot, when he heard he was going to Königstein, had casually asked if he would inquire how I was. 'Well, that's that,' I said to myself. I don't know just what I had expected, but I was pretty disappointed. I resigned myself to getting no information from the Colonel."

"But after I had given up hope, he did give me a message—without knowing it. 'Oh, by the way,' he said, 'before I forget'—just as though it were the most inconsequential thing in the world, as I suppose it was to him—'Pecquot did ask me to give you a bit of news he thought might interest you—something about your cousin—now what was her name—Maria, was it?—Have you a cousin Maria?'"

"I haven't, of course, but I knew at once it was going to be something about Maria Günther. 'Yes,' I said, 'I have. What's the news about her?'"

"'Oh, just that Pecquot has been playing the peacemaker,' Gabriel laughed. 'It seems he persuaded her to make up with her husband. That's a new rôle for him, isn't it? I always thought he was better at separating husbands and wives than bringing them together. He

says you will probably be pleased to know that she's going back to her husband.'

"Yes, of course," I said. "Thanks very much. I'm glad that rift in the family is settled. It was a shame, their estrangement.' And all the time I was thinking: 'That means that Maria Günther is coming back here—and if Pecquot was so anxious that I should know about it, it must be because she is coming to help us.'"

There was a knock at the door, and General de Rensac came in.

"I say, Beaulieu, what do you know about Philippe Aramond?" he asked.

"Nothing very good, I'm afraid," the Admiral answered, "and probably you know as much as I do. Big businessman—mixed up in some funny-looking international deals—political intriguer—supposed to have put up some money to buy arms for that crazy *cagoulard* movement before the war. Why? He's not a friend of yours, I hope?"

"I didn't think so," said Rensac, "but apparently he does. He sent me a message by Gabriel."

"That so?" the Admiral returned. "What was it?—if it isn't private, that is."

"Oh, I wouldn't be getting any private messages from Aramond," Rensac said. "I don't know him well enough. I've only met him casually once or twice, in a crowd. He seemed a nice enough fellow—of course, I don't know anything about his record. But it seems that he made quite a point of asking Gabriel to give me a message. All he said, though, was, 'Be sure to tell General de Rensac that his friends haven't forgotten him.'"

"A normal enough sentiment," the Admiral said musingly. "Thoughtful of him. . . . But you didn't know him well?"

"Hardly knew him at all," said Rensac. "That's why it struck me as peculiar. Why should a chap whom I probably wouldn't even recognize if I ran into him take the trouble to send me a message at all? I wondered if that could be some new code device of yours."

"No," Beaulieu bit his underlip and wrinkled his brow. "Could that be Pecquot again, I wonder? I don't see any hidden meaning there, though. . . . That was all Gabriel said?"

"Every word," Rensac said. "Those were the exact words, too. I

took careful note of them, because it seemed strange to me at the time, and I suspected a message. But I can't make any sense out of it."

"No more can I," sighed the Admiral, "and Aramond isn't the kind of chap I should expect Pecquot to know. He *is* the type of businessman who ought to be doing well among the collaborationists, judging from what some members of the mission were saying about the government. Depend on it, General, there's no more to it than this: Aramond, by all accounts, is a pusher and an opportunist, and he makes a business of keeping in the good graces of influential people. He saw a chance of improving his acquaintance with you by sending you a message, so he did."

"I suppose that's it," Rensac agreed, "but I'd hardly describe myself as an influential person at the moment."

Before I left the Admiral, I told him about Ritter's visit to the orderlies, and of my own suspicions of him. The Admiral was greatly disturbed.

"I hope you're wrong, Lambert," he said. "Have you anything definite to go on—anything he said, or any other suspicious sign?"

"No, sir," I said. "It was just a general impression—and the fact that it's so easy for Germans to disguise themselves as Alsatians. You remember how many of them we bumped into in different localities. Every suspicious person we came across with a touch of German accent said he was an Alsatian, and half the time they had no very good excuse for being so far away from home. Do you remember the one in French uniform who said he had gotten separated from his company, and who was shot when we were able to check with that company, and to discover that he didn't belong to it? I thought there were a good many others who should have been shot, but by that time we had gotten to a point where it didn't seem to matter whether we were surrounded by spies or not."

"Don't be prejudiced against Alsatians, Lambert," Beaulieu said. "I know there were some autonomists and separatists among them, even some who were frankly pro-German, but on the whole, the Alsatian population was just as loyal as any other French group. They have a tradition of German oppression after 1870 to remember,

you know. Before 1914, when they were still Germans, they gave Berlin much more trouble than they ever gave us after they returned to France. They were German-speaking, but they hated Prussian methods, and that made them feel that they were still French."

"I didn't mean that I thought the Alsatians worked for the Germans," I said. "They may have succeeded in buying some Alsatians—or perhaps they planted some Germans in Alsace in 1918, who have been working for them ever since. But most of the suspicious Alsatians—I used to run across some of them in Paris before the war—I thought were probably Germans who found it easy to explain away their German accent and appearance by adopting that nationality. Ritter might be a German masquerading as an Alsatian for all any of us could tell."

"We can only hope he isn't," the Admiral said. "I don't suppose any letters the orderlies gave him would be particularly important for the Germans; but what worries me is that I happen to know that General Dubert gave his orderly a letter to be sent back to France. The orderly told him that some one in the mission had offered to carry letters back, and that certainly must mean your man Ritter. The bad thing about it is that the reason why Dubert was so anxious to take advantage of the opportunity was that he wanted to report his suspicions on Kiewitz's death. What the Germans will do if they intercept that letter, I'm sure I don't know. They would certainly consider it an extremely grave matter. . . . If Dubert had spoken to me about it before he sent it off, I would have advised him against taking the risk. But it's too late now. We can only hope that Ritter is to be trusted."

"And that, if he is, they won't search him," I said.

I returned from the Admiral's room to meet the orderlies filing out to the gymnasium. We had just been ordered to report there at once.

We were lined up as though for inspection, and Lieutenant Greffe entered. His face was redder than usual, and he seemed very angry. In his hand he held a number of sheets of paper, of different sizes and colors. I felt a sinking sensation in the pit of my stomach, for I

had a presentiment of what was to come—a presentiment so exact that as the scene was enacted, it seemed to me that I had gone through it, once before, in some vague, distant past.

“Louis Blanc,” Greffe shouted. “Three paces forward.”

The orderly named stepped out of the line. Greffe looked him over slowly, letting his eyes travel from his head to his feet, then back to his head again.

“I see by this letter,” he said finally, “which you tried to slip by the censorship, in violation of the rules governing this camp, that you are dissatisfied with the food here. The bread, I see, you find of bad quality. Well, we will try to satisfy you. *Feldwebel*, note that no bread ration is to be issued to Louis Blanc for a week. Perhaps he will be able to appreciate it more adequately when he gets it again.”

He looked back at the letter in his hand.

“So I look like a bulldog, Monsieur Blanc? Very well, sir. You’ll discover that I not only look like a bulldog. I am like a bulldog. I know how to bite, Monsieur Blanc, as you will very soon find out.”

He passed to the next letter, and called another name. Nine orderlies in all had given letters to Ritter, and all nine were punished in varying degrees. Bonnot was the worst sufferer: he got two weeks’ solitary confinement in a dark cell.

But I could not interest myself in the plight of the orderlies, for I couldn’t forget what had been in General Dubert’s letter. If they had read those of the orderlies, they must have read his; and what he had said was so much more serious than anything the orderlies’ letters had contained that I was unable even to imagine what the result would be.

I would have warned the Admiral at once, but it was not possible. It was already after hours when we left the gymnasium. The officers’ buildings were locked. And we were taken straight to the casemate, and locked in as well.

When I entered the Admiral’s room the next morning with his breakfast, he motioned at once to the phonograph. As soon as I had started it, he said:

“They read the orderlies’ letters?”

“Yes, sir,” I answered. “How did you know?”

The Admiral looked at me for a moment before he replied. Then he said quietly: “General Dubert was found dead in his bed this morning.”

The previous night, about ten, General Simon, who occupied the next room to Dubert, had heard a voice which he took to be that of Lieutenant Greffe, telling Dubert that the commander wished to see him at once in his office. He heard them leave, and for some time he listened for the sound of the return, with the intention of asking Dubert why he had been summoned after locking-up time. But it grew late, Dubert did not return, and he finally fell asleep.

In the small hours of the morning, he was awakened by what sounded like several persons moving about cautiously in Dubert's room. He heard a few low words, apparently in German, but not quite distinguishable. He thought it too late to go into Dubert's room that night, so he waited until the next morning, when he went in as soon as he had dressed. Dubert was lying in bed, dead. Simon immediately called the doctor, who examined the French officer, and finally reported that he had died several hours ago, apparently from heart failure during his sleep.

Simon was wise enough to say nothing of the noises he had heard except to the surest among the non-collaborationists, who held an improvised inquest on the case. Beaulieu told about the letter, and in the light of that information, the general opinion was that Dubert had been deliberately murdered. The theory was suggested that he might have died from a heart attack provoked by a violent discussion with Günther over the letter, but none of the generals took much stock in that possibility. Assuming that General Simon had interpreted correctly the noises heard in Dubert's room, they believed that his body had been carried back and put into bed, to make it appear that his death had been natural.

Although it was apparent that too much suspicion might have its risks, it was also agreed that too little might seem significant to the Germans also. It was therefore decided not to let Dubert's death pass without question. General de Rensac sent word to General Günther that he wished to see him alone, to make a communication to him in the name of all the prisoners. Günther received him at once, and Rensac told him that the French generals, ‘as a matter of form,’

desired that a French doctor should be summoned to examine Dubert's body and to issue the death certificate.

Günther flushed.

"A death certificate by a French doctor would be of no value in Germany," he said. "I am required by our law to provide a certificate issued by a German doctor. Dr. Manhold, who examined the body, is an eminent specialist from the medical faculty of Berlin. I could not insult him by calling in another doctor after he has stated his findings. Nor do I suppose, General, that you mean to imply that your doctors are more capable than ours. I regret that in any case it would not be possible to comply with your request, since we could not wait for the arrival of a doctor from France. Why, that would take several days!"

"I am certain," Rensac said quietly, "that if you wire to Marshal Pétain, he will be willing to dispatch a French Army doctor at once by plane."

"I am sorry, General," Günther returned, regaining his suavity, "but even so, it would be impossible for a French doctor to arrive in time. I had no idea, of course, that it would occur to any one to challenge the ability of Dr. Manhold. I have already made arrangements for the funeral to be held at four o'clock—the announcement will be made on the loud speakers shortly. I cannot delay the funeral. The necessities of service make that impossible. I hope you will all be able to attend the ceremony."

"You will be kind enough, General," Rensac said harshly, "to enter on the prison records that a formal request was made to you to permit examination of the body by a French doctor, which you refused. Good day."

The funeral was held in the chapel of the castle, built close by the main building, in the courtyard. A priest from the village of Königstein read the service. At its completion, the six senior officers, who had been chosen as bearers, carried the coffin from the chapel, preceded by the General's orderly, with his decorations on a cushion, according to the custom for French military funerals. Headed by the priest, the generals fell in behind the coffin, and the procession

moved silently towards the little cemetery of the castle of Königstein, only 200 yards away.

It might have been a funeral procession in a small town in France, if it had not been for the two German officers who preceded the procession, and the German sentries posted on either side of the way, who presented arms as the coffin passed.

Arrived at the open grave, the pall bearers stopped, and the coffin was lowered gently into the ground. Then, one by one, they passed slowly before it, each casting a handful of earth into the grave. The profound silence was broken only by the faint sound of their feet on the gravel, and the patter of the handfuls of soil falling upon the wood of the coffin. As each man passed before the grave of his brother officer, his profile etched sharply against a dead gray sky, he seemed to be vowing himself to eternal memory and to the promise that the dead should be avenged.

When all the generals had passed by, General de Rensac stepped to the head of the grave, a Bible in his hand. Lieutenant Greffe hurried over to him, and said in a low voice:

“I must warn you, General, that we cannot permit you to say anything of political significance.”

Rensac turned a withering glance upon him. Then, without deigning to answer, he opened the Bible, and said:

“Gentlemen, as our last salute to our late comrade, I will read from the Holy Scriptures, Daniel 11, 36 to 45.”

Greffe stepped back with an expression of relief. Rensac began to read, in a clear dry voice:

“And the king shall do according to his will,

“And he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every God,

“And shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods,

“And shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished.

“Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers,

“But in his estate shall he honor the God of forces,

“And the God whom his fathers knew not,

“Shall he honor with gold.

“Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange God,

“Whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory;

"And he shall cause them to rule over many,

"And shall divide the land for gain.

"And the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind,

"With chariots and with horsemen and with many ships,

"And he shall enter into the countries,

"And shall overflow and pass over.

"And many countries shall be overthrown:

"But these shall escape out of his hand.

"And tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him.

"Therefore he shall go forth with great fury,

"To destroy and utterly to make away many."

General de Rensac was reading more deliberately now, and with strong emphasis on the concluding lines:

"And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace,

"Between the seas on the glorious holy mountain"—

He paused, looked significantly around the circle of his companions, then looked Greffe full in the face as he pronounced the last sentence in a strong and triumphant voice:

"Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

And like a toneless chord, there rose from the circles of generals a deep-throated: "Amen."

XXIX

Maria Comes Home

HELMUTH WAS visiting me in the casemate. His French had really improved by now, and he had become quite fluent. I was sitting with him in the safety zone, and we were punctuating our French conversation with beer which Helmuth had brought down with him. He had reached a state of great good humor, and I decided to risk a question or two about General Dubert, concerning whose death the generals had been able to get no further information.

I told him that the rumor was going around that just before Dubert's death he had written a letter expressing suspicions about the "heart attack" of General Kiewitz.

"It may have been lucky for all of you," Helmuth said darkly, "that Dubert died just when he did. I did hear something about such a letter. The Gestapo came to investigate. It seems he named them. The whole thing might have gone very far indeed if General Dubert hadn't died. That automatically ended the investigation."

"Do you suppose they might have questioned him already, and that his excitement brought on a heart attack?" I asked, trying to appear ingenuous.

Helmuth set down his bottle of beer. He seemed suddenly to have become completely sober.

"Let me give you some good advice, Lambert," he said. "Forget about the whole business. You seem to be a little green about matters of this kind, otherwise you wouldn't let your curiosity run away with you. Let me tell you the lesson all of us here have learned—when it's a question of the Gestapo, shut your eyes, ears and mouth, turn off your senses, and black out your memory. The Gestapo doesn't like people with memories."

He picked up his bottle again, and dropped his serious tone for a light one.

"So you doubted me when I told you that my General had a pretty wife, didn't you, Lambert? You even called me a liar, you damned Frenchman. Well, you're going to have to eat your words. Frau Maria Günther is arriving at Schloss Königstein in a few days. Get a good look at her if you're lucky enough to have the chance. You'll see that the crusty old bachelor, as you called him, has a beautiful young wife—the sort of girl you can't take your eyes off of."

He gazed contemplatively into the depths of his glass.

"She's like most women who are too good-looking for their own or any one else's good, though," he went on, disapprovingly. "Hard to handle. Now when I marry, I'm going to pick a good plain healthy hard-working woman with no nonsense about her. Strong legs. That's what a woman needs. And not too much looks. There's less complications with that kind. When that man Churchill declared war on us, *meine Frau General* packed up and went off to see her family in Switzerland. Some bug bit her. Afraid of the war, probably. I know the General didn't like it. But now she's coming back again, and he's in rare good humor."

It was too late to see the Admiral that day to give him this news, so I had to put it off until the following morning.

But after the morning drill the next day, the *Feldwebel*, before dismissing us, asked: "Can any of you paint walls?"

Nobody moved. It was fairly common for the Germans to look for experts among us—electricians, plumbers or specialized workers of other kinds—to do odd jobs whenever anything at the castle required repairing. The orderlies resented having extra jobs saddled on them, so the Germans rarely got any volunteers. Unless they had some one on record as having a civilian occupation useful to them, or unless they needed for a repeat job some one who had been caught before we knew what such requests were about, they usually had little luck in getting help.

I was listed with them as having been a moving picture cameraman in civilian life, an occupation for which it wasn't very likely that they would have any use, so I was safe. But suddenly it occurred to me that if some one were being sought to paint walls at this particu-

lar moment, when I knew Frau Günther was about to arrive, it might be for her apartment. I had no time to consider how I might be able to take advantage of this situation to get in touch with her, but I thought I could work that out later. I quickly stepped forward. Some of the other orderlies looked at me in surprise, and even the *Feldwebel* looked astonished. I had been mentally classified as an intellectual, rather than a worker, so he asked somewhat doubtfully:

"Are you a painter, Lambert?"

"Not regularly, sir," I said, "but I have done occasional jobs of painting. I decorated my own apartment."

I threw that in because I thought it might still leave me a chance of escape, in case the work they had in mind was painting stables, or something equally uninteresting.

"That is perfect," said the *Feldwebel*. "That is exactly the sort of work we want done. Serve your officer's breakfast, then report to me."

I told the Admiral about Frau Günther's expected arrival, and my own inspiration about volunteering for the painting job, which, on the evidence of the *Feldwebel's* answer, I had high hopes might prove to be just what I had hoped.

"Excellent, Lambert," the Admiral said. "You're extremely quick-witted. But be very careful not to give yourself away. In the first place, we don't know that Frau Günther's return has anything to do with Pecquot's visit to her. Don't commit yourself with her. Secondly, remember that there is danger of being overheard."

I promised to be extremely careful, and hurried off to report. To my great delight, the *Feldwebel* told me at once that some redecorating had to be done in the General's apartment. I was a little sobered, however, when he went on:

"I hope you know your business, Lambert. This is rather a delicate job, and it must be well done."

Though I had handled a paint brush on many occasions, and didn't think it would be too difficult, this worried me a little, for I had never done anything requiring great skill. It was too late to back out now, however, so I followed him into one of the bedrooms of the General's apartment, where several cans of paint stood on heavy

paper, with which the floor had already been carefully covered. The *Feldwebel* was explaining the color scheme to me carefully, when General Günther came in unexpectedly. He had me repeat the instructions to him, and when I had finished, he nodded and said: "Good. It is very important that you should do a good job."

"I will do my best, sir," I answered, smiling inwardly at my private picture of what "the best" would be.

He looked me up and down appraisingly. I doubt if he had ever noticed me before.

"That is good," he said. "Yes. Do your best. I will see that you do not lose by it."

Left alone to the job, I began to look it over, and my doubts concerning my ability increased. I had done only simple bits of painting hitherto, but here there were elaborate moldings to be followed carefully in a contrasting color, and it looked to me as though a highly professional job were necessary. I was afraid that I might quickly give my inexperience away, and be taken off the job, so I decided to drag out the preliminaries as long as possible, in the hope that even if I weren't allowed to finish it, I wouldn't be sent away before having a chance to talk to Maria Günther.

A small amount of plaster had been given me for smoothing out some slightly uneven spots in the wall, filling nail holes, and so forth, and I managed to consume all the morning and a good part of the afternoon slapping little patches and daubs of plaster on the walls with my trowel. I managed to distribute it around the walls widely enough so that it looked as if I had been doing a very painstaking job, which must have taken a good deal of time.

About the middle of the afternoon, I decided that I couldn't put off starting to paint much longer, and so I turned my attention to the cans. I read the directions for mixing the paints, which were in German, and though I knew most of the terms employed, the technical language of painters wasn't part of my vocabulary, and one or two phrases were obscure. That gave me an idea for stalling a little longer. I went to the *Feldwebel's* quarters, and said: "I've finished preparing the walls for the paint, but your paints seem to be differently compounded than ours, and I can't read the directions on the cans. Could you translate them for me?"

He came back to the apartment with me, and proceeded to translate. Not all the technical terms were too familiar to him, either, and I slowed him up by being purposely as stupid as possible about it. I consumed about an hour of his time, and then said:

"I think I had better put off mixing the paint until tomorrow. Otherwise it will stand overnight after mixing, and the effect won't be as good as if I put it on the walls just after it is mixed."

The *Feldwebel* agreed, and I left the apartment for the casemate. I had gained one day. Tomorrow I would have to find new expedients.

But the next day the problem solved itself.

I managed to spend a good deal of the morning mixing the paint, but at last the moment came when I could no longer delay starting to put it on the wall. With considerable misgivings, I started to apply the first coat to the wall, beginning with the large surfaces uninterrupted by molding, where I judged I could do the best job. I had only taken a few strokes with the brush when I heard voices in the next room. One I recognized as that of General Günther. The other was a woman's!

"Ah!" I said to myself. "Frau Günther is here!"

The door opened. The General politely held the door wide for her as Maria Günther entered. Helmuth had not exaggerated. She was a genuine beauty. I knew that she was younger than her husband; but I hadn't expected to find her some thirty years younger, as was the case. I understood at once why Pecquot had taken the trouble to follow her all the way from Switzerland to Königstein.

"I'm sorry that I didn't know you were coming so soon," the General apologized. "I thought we would have a day or two more to finish painting your room, before you got here. I ordered it done in the same colors you had before; but if you want to make any changes, give your instructions to the French orderly here, who is doing the painting. You'd better have him move your things into the next room, too, so they won't be splashed with paint."

A German soldier came in with Frau Günther's bags. She told him to take one of them, a small toilet case, apparently, into the bathroom.

"I'm going to freshen up a bit before lunch," she told the General, and disappeared into the bathroom. He left, as did the soldier, and I

was again alone. I went back to stirring my paint, not that it needed any more mixing, but because it was easier for me to think while doing that than while painting the walls, which required more concentration. I realized that I must waste no time. I might never have another opportunity to speak to her alone. I must find out at once, somehow or other, whether she was likely to be of service to us.

In a few minutes she came back from the bathroom, and moved to and fro, unpacking, between the room where I was working and the adjoining one, which together gave her a bedroom-living room suite. She had changed from her travelling costume to a light dress, which made her beauty even more striking than before. I had expected, I don't know why, a tall majestic blonde. Actually, she was of average height, had dark brown hair, and gave an impression of transparent fragility. There was a haunting wistfulness in her face, accentuated by large deep-set eyes, and high cheekbones.

While I was searching for a pretext to speak to her, she made it unnecessary for me to do so.

"Would you mind moving the armchairs into the next room?" she asked, in a deep soft voice, speaking in faultless French, and using the politest forms. "I'm afraid they'll get splashed here."

"With pleasure, Madame," I answered, trying myself, through this phrase, to indicate to her that I was of her own social class, not a simple workman.

I moved the chairs, and returned to the bedroom. She was sitting on the edge of the bed, drumming on the footboard with her fingers. I thought she seemed a little nervous.

"You were a painter in civilian life?" she asked. I had the impression that she wanted to say more, that perhaps she was as anxious to sound me out as I was to sound her out, and that she had asked this banal question for the purpose of breaking the ice. I decided to shoot my bolt at once. Watching her closely, I answered:

"No, Madame, but I have done some decorating of my own apartment in Paris, and since the war I have done several jobs like this for my officers. I painted the whole apartment of one of them—Captain de Pecquot."

Her drumming fingers stopped abruptly. She gripped the footboard of the bed, and the knuckles stood out dead white from the

tension of her grip. But otherwise she didn't stir, and it was with apparent complete calm that she returned: "Did you say Captain de Pecquot?"

"Yes, Captain de Pecquot," I repeated. "He was in the aviation. I did his apartment for him shortly before the war, while he was vacationing at Lake Como, recovering from an accident."

Maria Günther looked at me searchingly. I was watching her just as intently, but I could detect nothing except a momentary gleam in her eyes, which I might have imagined, when I mentioned Lake Como. I thought we must be like two fencers, each seeking for an opening, waiting to be sure of success before lunging. Whether she were on our side or not, she must by now, I thought, be wondering what I knew; if she were on our side, she was no doubt trying to make up her mind whether to trust me.

"What is your name?" she asked suddenly.

"Lambert, Madame," I answered.

She thought for another moment.

"Do you know Admiral Beaulieu?" she ventured.

"I am his orderly," I answered.

Maria Günther paused. I felt that she was almost ready to speak, but was still not quite sure of me. I, for my part, was almost sure of her, since she had mentioned Admiral Beaulieu—but not quite. She might possibly have drawn Pecquot out without meaning to help him. There was still some mistrust between us. When she spoke again, it was very slowly and deliberately.

"You seem exceptionally well educated for an orderly," she said. "I wonder if you could answer a question for me? French isn't my native language, you see, though I've spoken it since I was a child. The other day, I came across a very common word used in an entirely different fashion from what seemed normal to me, and I wondered if I was wrong, or if the writer who had used the word had made an error. Do you know, I wonder, if there is any other meaning than the ordinary one for the word 'letter'?"

I knew at once what she meant. That was one of the words in our code, which I knew by heart from having taught it to Savignon. If Pecquot had given her the code, it was certain that she was on our side.

"Yes, Madame," I said, "it means that I may have complete confidence in you; and you may have complete confidence in me. Did you bring us word from Captain de Pecquot?"

Maria Günther heaved a deep sigh, and then broke into a sudden laugh.

"Goodness, what a relief!" she said. "You frightened me so when you first mentioned him! I had to speak to you, if you were really Admiral Beaulieu's orderly—but I was so afraid of a trap! You don't realize what the atmosphere is like in this country today! It's so full of suspicion, it infects every one! I've been in terror ever since I crossed the border—but I had to come. You see, I couldn't help much from Switzerland—but how much do you know?"

"Everything that can be known from here," I said. "But of course we have had no word from Pecquot. That was why I volunteered for this painting job, in the hope that I would be able to talk with you. I'm not a painter. I hope your room doesn't suffer too much."

"Oh, that doesn't matter," she said impatiently. "That isn't important. If you can just make it look good enough so that they don't suspect anything, I can put up with an amateur painting job. I wish there were nothing more to worry about in days like these.

"Listen—this is what you must tell the Admiral. To begin with, Captain de Pecquot asked me for information about Königstein, without hiding from me that he wanted to engineer some escapes. I assure you that I am just as anxious as he is to try to get some of you out of the hands of these horrible people. But I told him that it had been some time since I left Königstein, and that certain dispositions had certainly been changed. I thought it would be better for me to come back here. That was easy enough. My husband was delighted to hear that I wanted to return. I was less delighted—but I saw no other way to be useful.

"I've already found out that it was wise of me to come back, for the first piece of advice I would have given you from a distance would have turned out badly. If you had tried to follow it, you would undoubtedly have been caught, and your escape plans would have been revealed. There is another passage through the rock to the valley. I used it when I wanted to slip down to the village without being seen. It extended from a hidden door not far from the regular

exit. I thought that might furnish a means of escape, but coming in, I saw that it had been walled up. Now we will have to think of something else.

"Here's one idea that occurred to me. Why don't you suggest this to Admiral Beaulieu? I have friends in Dresden of whom I'm very sure. I know they hate the Nazis, and I'm certain they would do anything in the world for me. Besides them, I can get in touch with an agent of the Polish secret service there. Pecquot told me how to contact him. Couldn't General de Rensac, General Verger and Admiral Beaulieu pretend to be ill, and ask to be removed to the hospital there? We might be able to spirit them away from the hospital."

I shook my head.

"I doubt if that would work," I said, "especially for three of them at one time. And besides, there's a special reason for keeping them out of that hospital."

I told her the story of General Kiewitz and General Dubert, concluding:

"You see the danger. They're very angry with Verger and Rensac, because of their intransigent attitude, but I doubt if they would have them removed to the Special Department of the hospital unless they did something to get themselves ticketed as immediately dangerous. But if they should themselves request to be taken to the hospital, so that it would be evident that they went there of their own free will, I'm afraid the opportunity would be too much of a temptation for the Gestapo. I doubt if they'd get out alive."

"The beasts!" Maria exclaimed. "I thought I knew what they were capable of, but I would never have thought of that! We'll have to find something else then. In the meantime, tell your Admiral that Pecquot will be able to communicate with him through me. I have made arrangements to have his letters received by some one in the village who is devoted to me, and for double safety, we are using your code, with some additions Captain de Pecquot has made to it."

We heard footsteps outside. I hurriedly returned to the baseboard, which I had started to paint during our talk, in order not to arouse the suspicions of any one who might enter and wonder why I had made no progress. The General entered.

"Aren't you coming to lunch, Maria?" he asked testily. "It will be cold."

"I was just coming," Maria said, and left the room without a glance in my direction.

The General started to follow her, then paused.

"You aren't overworking, young man," he said. "Can't you do better than that?"

"I'm sorry sir," I said. "Your German paints are not like ours. I had some difficulties in mixing them."

"Go serve your officer his lunch, get your own, and then come back here," the General said. "You'll have to work faster. At this rate, the room won't be fit to occupy for a week."

XXX

Confidences

THE MOMENT I told Admiral Beaulieu the good news, he called in Verger and Rensac, and while they ate their lunch together, they discussed the next moves under cover of the blaring phonograph. They decided that it was too soon yet to fix upon any definite method of escape, which would have to depend on whatever information Maria Günther could gather. So they turned their attention to the problem of maintaining communication with her after the paint job was over, when I would have no further excuse for seeing her.

Several suggestions were brought up, but all of them had obvious defects. Suddenly, Beaulieu slapped his knee, and said: "I have it!"

He turned to Rensac.

"General, your room is on the other side of the corridor. Aren't the windows of the commander's apartment visible from it?"

"Yes," said Rensac, "I believe they are."

"Lambert!" Beaulieu called. "Can you identify the window of Maria's room from the outside?"

"I think so, sir," I answered. "There are two of them, as a matter of fact."

"Two!" the Admiral exclaimed. "Why, that's even better! Just step into Rensac's room with me, and point them out—don't forget not to speak; there's no phonograph there."

With the Admiral, I went to Rensac's room, easily located the two windows; and drew a little diagram to show the Admiral which they were.

We returned to Beaulieu's room.

"It's perfect!" he said. "Couldn't be better if we had designed them on purpose!" And picking up a pad of paper, he sat down, and began drawing on it.

"For goodness sake, Beaulieu!" Rensac exploded. "Would you mind taking time enough to tell us what it's all about?"

"Oh—excuse me," said the Admiral. "It came to me so suddenly that I didn't realize I hadn't explained. Look!"

He held up the pad.

"Here are Maria's two windows. By great good luck, they're the old-fashioned kind, divided into 16 small panes each. There is a shade at the top, and two curtains on either side. . . . Lambert—do those curtains always hang straight, or can they be looped up at the middle?"

"There are hooks and cords to hold them back, sir," I said. "I noticed them while I was figuring out the painting job."

"Excellent," said the Admiral. "That doubles our vocabulary."

"Now, here you are," he said, holding out the pad, on which he had sketched a number of diagrams, with a phrase opposite each. "Shade all the way up in both windows, side curtains hanging straight—position one: opposite it we put code phrase number one. Shade pulled down to the first horizontal cross bars in both windows, rest unchanged—position two, phrase two in the code—see? We can use every variation, with the shades in the same position in both windows, or in different positions in each, and with the curtains hanging straight or looped back. It will give us quite a range of messages. . . . We could make an alphabet, of course, but that would mean changing the positions of the shades for each letter, and some one would certainly notice it from outside. This way a message is simply set in the windows and left. If everything can't be said with one signal, we can always have a special signal—say a vase on the windowsill to tell us to watch for a second message at a stated time interval—or some similar signal to tell us to read a message in each window separately instead of in combination. The possibilities are almost limitless!

"Lambert, I'll draw the diagrams and match them up with code phrases—in fact, gentlemen, we'd better all put our heads together to make sure we cover all possible contingencies. It will take a little time to work it all out, so Lambert can take the diagrams to Frau Günther tomorrow.

"You can ask her this now, Lambert. See if it is convenient for her

if we watch her window for signals every day at 9, 12, 2 and 5—that fits in most easily with our schedule. The way she has her shades and curtains now, which I suppose is their normal arrangement, will be neutral. That is, it will mean: ‘No message.’ Show her which is Rensac’s window, and tell her that when the shade is pulled all the way down after she has sent a message, it will mean that it has been received. If she doesn’t see that signal, she is to repeat her message at the next fixed hour. Now, have you got that straight?”

I repeated the instructions. The Admiral nodded, satisfied, and as I left, the three officers set to work to list the phrases they would need to include in their code. Half an hour later, back in Maria Günther’s apartment, I told her of the plan, which she found excellent.

“I’d better get a little painting done now,” I said, “otherwise the General will be suspicious. He told me this morning that he didn’t think I had been progressing fast enough.”

“It wasn’t only that,” Maria said. “There’s something else we’ll have to look out for, or you may not be allowed to finish the job. He seems to be jealous of you.”

“Jealous!” I exclaimed incredulously. “But that’s ridiculous! And imagine a general being jealous of an orderly—and a prisoner, at that!”

“I know,” Maria said. “It’s silly. If he weren’t so unsure of me, I don’t suppose the idea would ever have entered his head. But it seems he heard our voices before he entered the room, though he didn’t actually overhear anything we had said, and he told me quite stiffly that it was unnecessary for me to talk to you beyond giving you any routine instructions.

“I said that I had only asked you a question or two about France, and added that you had seemed a very intelligent person. That was a mistake. I hadn’t realized that the slightest praise of any other man would set him off as it did. He became furiously angry. I was really appalled at his complete lack of self-control, especially over something that seemed to me like a trifle. I don’t know how to explain it, unless it is his extreme possessiveness, and his mania for discipline. He roared that it was beneath my dignity to talk to a common sailor, especially a Frenchman, and that I had forgotten my position as the

wife of a German officer. The way he shouted at me roused me, and I nearly spoiled the whole business. I said orderlies and Frenchmen were human beings, and that I refused to be unfriendly to any human beings, and then stopped myself just in time before going on to lash out at what I was going to call the inhuman snobbish arrogant attitude common to German officers. But I suddenly realized that I might upset all our plans, so I forced myself to apologize for flaring up—although it was certainly he who had exploded inexcusably—and then he apologized too, saying that he really wanted to live with me on better terms than before, and that he would make allowances for the fact that I wasn't a German and didn't understand what was expected of me in my position. Magnanimous of him, wasn't it? But I let it go at that. Too much depends on remaining on good terms with him for me to risk arousing his distrust. I think we had better be careful that he doesn't catch us talking together again."

We agreed on that. She went back into her living room, and I returned to my painting, in order to produce some evidence of activity. But about half an hour later, she came back into the bedroom, and asked curiously: "When did you first meet Captain de Pecquot?"

"During the war," I said.

"But you said something about painting his apartment for him before the war," she said, and then added, after an instant's hesitation, "while he was at Lake Como."

"That was just to give you a clue," I said. "I invented that painting job on the spur of the moment."

"But how did you know that mentioning Lake Como would give me a clue?" Maria asked. "I mean—how much did Captain de Pecquot tell you about me?"

The question was a little embarrassing. I didn't want to let her think that Pecquot had been boasting about an amorous adventure to his friends.

"You see," I said finally, "both the Admiral and myself were very good friends of Pecquot. The Admiral had known him since childhood, and though I had only known him for a year or so, we became intimate very quickly for a number of reasons. We both went to the same high school, and knew the same people and the same places. We had the same tastes in literature, music and painting, and though

he was a commissioned officer and I was then only a chief petty officer, my work as Admiral Beaulieu's secretary threw me into close touch with him. And besides that, you know, there's nothing like undergoing a common danger to knit friendships."

"What sort of danger?" Maria asked sharply. "Was it bad?"

"You needn't be alarmed now," I smiled. "It's all over, you know."

"Of course," she answered. "It's silly of me. But I'm—very fond—of Captain de Pecquot. Tell me about him—what he did during the war, how he acted—anything you think of."

As I painted, I told her of all our experiences together, while she listened, with parted lips and shining eyes, childishly entranced by even the least significant anecdotes. Finally I told her of the long periods of waiting in the refuges, and that it was at one such time that he had told us about her.

"We didn't know, any of us," I said, "whether we would get out of the war alive. It makes you think of your past—as they say dying men remember their past acts. You think of the beautiful things that have happened to you, and regret those you missed. Pecquot seemed to regret more than anything else that he had lost track of you. Your sudden departure from Lake Como must have been a bitter blow to him. I think he wished that he hadn't let you send him away when he followed you here."

"And I wish so, too," Maria said softly. Then a flush slowly enhanced her naturally high coloring. "So you know all about us," she said, "all about our little unfinished romance. Perhaps it's better that way, after all. I can speak to you freely—and I can talk to you about Pecquot, which is what I like to do most."

"But what we really ought to be considering first of all now is this question of how to arrange an escape. I must confess that I haven't anything to suggest yet. I must have time to look around, and find out how things operate here now. Finding that other passage closed has ended the only precise plan I had. Before I left Switzerland, I thought it would be quite simple. But then I was with Jacques. He makes everything seem simple. It doesn't look so easy now. But give me a few days, and I'm sure something will turn up."

"It doesn't seem very reasonable to expect that now perhaps—but I've distrusted reason since I was a child. Whenever there has seemed

to be no way out of a complicated situation, I've just waited, maybe prayed a little—and sooner or later something did turn up. The chief thing is to be ready to take advantage of it when it does."

"We've been ready for some time," I said, "but so far nothing has turned up. . . . Tell me, how did Pecquot locate you? We couldn't get much information from Mme. Beaulieu's letter."

"I don't think that was very hard," Maria said. "He seems to be in touch with agents in Switzerland. It's not very hard to discover where the wife of a German general is. There are so many different secret services prowling about that any one with any connection with a belligerent is on all the lists. He didn't expect to find me there, but he got the address of my family in Basle, and called to see if he could get my address. When he rang the bell, I opened the door. Both of us were so surprised that we simply stared at one another for a moment without speaking. When I recovered from my surprise, I didn't pretend that I wasn't happy to see him. I had thought of him often, in the last year, and I had wished, several times, that I hadn't sent him away."

"You see, when I did that, I had intended to make the best of my bad marriage and try to get along with my husband, no matter how difficult it was. But I hadn't counted on the war. That was too much for me. When the Germans overran Poland, and when they boasted so wantonly and so brazenly about how they were crushing the Poles, I was ashamed of myself for being married to a German officer. I lost control of myself, and told him so, just as he was leaving for active service, for they recalled him to the Army. It was a stupid thing to do. I only had to hold my tongue another day, and he would have been gone. That would have been all right. I wouldn't have minded that—on the contrary."

"Instead, I had to get into that idiotic, violent quarrel. I suppose it was really self-indulgence. I *wanted* to tell him what I thought of him, what I thought of his country, before he went. I didn't want to wait until he had gone, and have that hatred remain, bottled up inside of me. Oh, it was a horrible scene! I'm ashamed now when I think of it. I screamed, and stamped my feet, and finally burst out crying. I told him that I hated Germany, that I hated him for having made a German out of me, and that I hoped he never came back."

"He had realized already that I couldn't participate in his views about the superior German race, but I don't suppose it had ever occurred to him that I could become so violent about it. For that matter, I surprised myself. My tirades against everything he respected and worshipped stupefied him so that instead of taking his usual authoritative dogmatic attitude, he was thrown on the defensive. He tried to talk to me about the historic justification for attacking Poland and the necessities of war and of high politics, but he didn't succeed in convincing me, though I did calm down a little after I had finished crying. Finally he said stiffly, 'If you feel that way, you do not belong on German soil. You had better return to your soft, degenerate Switzerland until you understand things a little more clearly.' He went off to war, and I took his advice. It was the only thing we agreed on. I packed at once, and went back to my parents; I thought I had left this place forever, and I was happy that I would never see it again! And here I am, back once more."

"You didn't think of resuming your acquaintance with Captain de Pecquot then?" I asked. "After all, since you thought you had left your husband for good . . ."

"Of course I thought of it," Maria said. "I thought of almost nothing else. But how could I? I had sent him away. He had accepted my decision; no doubt by then, I thought, he had found some one else; he was married, perhaps—how could I interfere in his life again, perhaps enter it once more as an unwanted interloper? My pride wouldn't let me. . . . And then, what would he have thought of me? He knew that I was a German officer's wife, he knew that I had chosen to remain in Germany with my husband, in spite of the régime that I detested, and at best he must look upon me as some one tainted with the sins of the Germans, and at the worst, he might suspect me of having some evil purpose in getting in touch with him again—of being a spy or a propagandist, perhaps. No, I couldn't. . . . And I felt guilty, too, deeply guilty, although I wasn't a German; and I didn't want to see Jacques again with that guilt on me. I remembered him as an idealist, a man of the noblest feelings, and I did not feel that I was worthy to stand beside him. I wouldn't have dared to write him. . . . But now I feel that he has given me a task to perform which will redeem me."

"It wasn't a very happy life for me in Switzerland before Jacques came. I had nothing to look forward to, no future. I didn't ever intend to return to Germany, I didn't ever expect to see Jacques again, I didn't ever want to find any one except Jacques. Worlds were tumbling all about me, and I seemed to be living in a vacuum in the middle of it all, my life finished, and only one short little insignificant moment of happiness to look back to in all my life since I had ceased to be a girl and had become a woman. I didn't feel the events about me. They didn't affect me, they seemed unreal and far away—until France fell. That hurt me deeply, for I was brought up to speak French as well as German as a mother tongue. France has always seemed the great mother country to many of us in Switzerland, even in German Switzerland, where I was born, as well as in French Switzerland. She represented the most civilized culture of our time, and she incarnated the ideals of political liberty and democracy for which we Swiss have always had a fierce attachment. And when France fell, my heart ached for her. It ached for Jacques, too. It was his country, and I knew how he must feel.

"It was a shock to me when Jacques did appear, and didn't seem to have been smitten as I thought he would have been by what had happened to France. He was suave, polite, smilingly superior, it seemed to me—I suppose because I had made myself a rather melodramatic picture of the way a man ought to act when his country had been beaten in war. I was both embarrassed by his unexpected appearance, and reserved because of the unexpected coolness with which he seemed to have accepted disaster. I had expected, when I had dreamed (without hope, of course) of a future meeting, that I would meet a Jacques who would open his heart to me, who would confess his pain, and whom I could, perhaps, comfort a little. Instead, I was talking to a poised, polite gentleman, who made small talk about superficial matters. He didn't mention the war, or France, but talked about the beauty of the Swiss mountains, told me a few funny stories about French peasants, which didn't amuse me when I thought of the lot of those poor people under the Germans, complimented me on how well I looked, and asked, as though to make conversation, what I had been doing since he had seen me last. I tried to compare this stranger I saw before me with the picture I had carried in my

mind and in my heart, and I asked myself if I had built it up out of my own imagination, giving to this hollow personage deep-rooted qualities which in reality he had never possessed!

"He paid me flattering attention, but it didn't flatter me, for it was in the traditional vein of French gallantry, the surface attentions lavished indiscriminately on any woman. And I was shocked that he should be able to amuse himself in light flirtation when his country was in such dire straits, shocked that he, an Army officer, should be enjoying himself in Switzerland while his countrymen were dying before German firing squads. I couldn't contain myself. It must have been in part my bitter disappointment in him that caused me suddenly to burst out furiously that I couldn't understand him, that I had thought him a brave man, and yet here he was, wasting his time mouthing meaningless compliments to a woman while his country was writhing in her death agony.

"How can you forget your country,' I stormed at him, 'and take pleasure in the company of a woman who belongs to the enemy—yes, the wife of a German officer! If you were a man, if you were a Frenchman, you wouldn't stop fighting while there was a Nazi left on your soil! Why don't you keep on fighting them—at home, if you want, or abroad! Go to London and join de Gaulle! Or are you pleased to be safely out of the war, so you can return to soft living and to flirtations with women?"

"He appeared completely unmoved. He simply said quietly:

"That is strange advice from the wife of a German general."

"I'm not his wife!' I said. 'Not in any real sense. I've left him. I'm never going back to him! I hate them all, I hate their Nazi state and their Prussian arrogance, their lies and their cruelties! I wish I could fight them! I'm not a Frenchwoman, but I would fight for France if I knew how.'

"It was terribly unjust, I know now, but it was fortunate that I let myself go. For he was trying me out, and if I had kept my temper, he would probably have gone without telling me the real reason for his visit. I would have believed for the rest of my life that the picture I had formed of him was false, and I would have lost forever the one man I have ever cared for. He waited until I had finished, and then he said softly: 'Maria, I can tell you how to fight for France.' And

then he explained that he had not given up, that he was in the underground, and that he had forced himself to play his part, in spite of the fact that the sight of me had brought back to him the feeling he had experienced for me before, at Como and at Königstein, because the work he had to do was so important that he dared not let his own sentiments blind him, and he had to be sure that my sympathies were not with my husband and his people."

"I'm surprised he suggested that you should come back to Königstein," I said, "especially since he feels as he does about you."

"Oh, but he didn't," Maria said. "It was I who suggested that—and it was the hardest thing I could have done. I didn't see how I could help much from Switzerland. The few details I remembered about the fortress from more than a year earlier couldn't have helped much. But on the spot, I felt that I could do more. We had no precise plan, but we thought that if I were here, unsuspected, able to move about freely, and to learn the German routine, I could eventually help. So I steeled myself deliberately to play a deceitful game—please believe it's not easy for me, and not like me—and wrote to General Günther that I regretted my explosion before he had gone, that it must have been mostly the effect on my woman's nerves of seeing my husband go off to war, that I understood the situation better now, and that my place was with him and I wanted to occupy it once more. I had an immediate answer by telegram, asking me to return. And here I am."

We had talked so long, that I had done very little painting.

"That's just as well," Maria said. "The longer we can make it last, the longer we can maintain direct contact. Try to get out without any one seeing you, and I will say I had a headache, and asked you to go early. That will explain why you haven't gotten much done."

XXXI

Jealousy

WHEN I reported my long talk with Maria to Admiral Beaulieu, he asked me at once:

"Do you think she's sincere? There's no chance that she is leading us on, and setting a trap for us?"

"I'm sure of it," I said. "There's no mistaking the genuineness of her feelings. Besides that, I can recognize a woman in love. There is no doubt about it, Maria Günther is head over heels in love with Captain de Pecquot. You have only to watch her eyes, and to hear the tone of her voice when she speaks of him."

"I don't like that jealousy of her husband's," Beaulieu said, meditatively. "He must be terribly unsure of her if the mere fact that he heard her speaking to an orderly, and a prisoner of war at that, who simply happened to be doing a painting job in her room, caused him to make a scene. In that case, he may watch her too closely for her to do anything."

"We'll have to be careful," I said, "but she's our only ally. We have no choice. We have to work with her, or no one else. She ought to be able to handle her husband."

"Yes," Beaulieu said. "Well, if she can be trusted—and you seem to be sure of that—that's the main thing. I'll give you the signal code for her tomorrow."

When I returned to the casemate, Renier, who was sitting outside with a group of the orderlies, called out: "Here's the old lady-killer! How's the painting job, you sly dog! How did you know what you were going to fall into?"

"What do you mean?" I asked, determined not to let any one pump me about Maria Günther.

"Now, none of that," Renier said. "We know all about it. One of the *Luftwaffe* boys told us the old monkey's wife had arrived, and that she's a raving beauty. He said to ask you, if we didn't believe it. He says you're painting her apartment."

"Oh!" I said. "Is that what it's all about? Yes, I'm painting a couple of rooms in the General's apartment. I didn't know who they were for, though. I haven't seen his wife, if she's here."

"Better get busy then, *mon vieux*," Gaston chortled. "They say she's a sight for sore eyes. How much do you want to let me do the job for you?"

And a chorus of gibes broke out, most of them coarse enough, but I was glad to join in and get them off the subject I didn't want to talk about. The thought of a beautiful woman, even unseen, in the same narrow premises which they occupied, was enough to set off the imagination of these men, who had been deprived of all feminine contacts since we had been in the prison camp. Except for letters received from France, we lived in an exclusively male society. Some of the *Luftwaffe* spotters on the mountain had their wives and children with them, but they had quarters on a separate courtyard, separated from ours by a high wooden fence. There were a few knot-holes in the fence, and often orderlies, who wouldn't have bothered to turn their heads in Paris to look at the most beautiful women of France, would sneak a look through them hoping to glimpse one of the women. And from such fleeting glances, they would return with undoubtedly highly exaggerated descriptions of the charms of the Gretchens, as they called them, to annoy their fellows who hadn't had their luck. Now it was the news of Maria's presence which had aroused them, and they regaled one another with imaginary portraits of what she must look like, based on the very scanty data provided by the *Luftwaffe* man. I could have told them how far from the truth they all were, but my idea was to pretend to know nothing.

When the *Feldwebel* let me into Günther's apartment the next day to continue with the painting job, Maria wasn't there. She came in soon afterwards, however, explaining that she had been taking the air in the commander's private garden. I gave her Admiral Beaulieu's window-curtain code.

"I'm worrying about a new problem today," she told me. "I've arranged with Jacques to communicate with him through Dresden. It seems there is an agent there in touch with his movements in France. He gave me his name, so I'm sure he trusts me thoroughly. I don't know whether I can persuade my husband to let me go to Dresden. Of course, I can always go down to the village, and perhaps I may be able to arrange there for some one to take messages for me to Dresden. Or I might even mail a letter from the village. The censorship doesn't open letters inside the country, unless they already have a reason to be suspicious of somebody."

"I wouldn't do that," I said, alarmed. "If this man is an underground agent, they might be watching his mail. If they got him, they'd get you, too. And I don't think any more people should know that you are carrying on a secret correspondence than is absolutely necessary. I'd advise you to wait until you get a chance to go there yourself."

"I suppose you told Admiral Beaulieu all about our talk," Maria said. "Wasn't he disappointed that I arrived without any definite plan for escape?"

"I don't think he expected it," I said. "We have already had several plans, which have all fallen through. We're not pinning hopes on any others ahead of time. The mere fact that you are here gives us as much hope as we're willing to allow ourselves, but we're not expecting any miracles. He did ask me this morning if Pecquot had any facilities for getting people across the border, in case any one did get out of here."

"I think he has," Maria answered. "But it takes some arranging. That's what he's working on now. It's one of the things he has to let me know through his man in Dresden. I imagine he can fix that up more quickly than we can find a way to get you out of here. That seems to be our hardest problem now."

She sat down, and gazed fixedly for a moment at the floor, as though she had just discovered something intensely interesting there. Then, without lifting her eyes, she asked abruptly:

"Does Jacques love me?"

The question came without the slightest warning. I didn't know how to answer. It was true that Pecquot had spoken of her with

considerable feeling, and true also that he wasn't the man to chase a woman across the continent of Europe unless he felt strongly about her. But on the other hand, he had a reputation for multiplying amorous adventures of a lighter sort, and I couldn't tell whether this wasn't just one more affair, a little more intense than the others, perhaps, but still not particularly serious.

I stammered something about not having seen him since Cherbourg, and knowing nothing about his private affairs.

"But you must have an ideal!" Maria exclaimed, rising, and pacing restlessly across the room and back again. "He told you about meeting me in Switzerland, and following me here. Surely you had some sort of impression—either that he was just telling the story of a flirtation—or that he really fell in love with me—" her voice dropped almost to a whisper—"as I fell in love with him."

"I don't know," I said. "How can I tell? I don't know him well enough. He seemed to be obsessed by your memory. I had the feeling that that was why he talked about it—because he wanted to tell the story to himself again, not to us. And I'm sure if he followed you so far, you must have made a very strong impression on him."

"But that's not enough!" Maria cried, stopping in front of me. "He must love me, Lambert—he *must*! Think of it! I have come back to a man I hate, my husband—and only to betray him! It's true, I wanted to come back here myself—and it wasn't just love that prompted me to do it. But why should I deny it? Today it's my love for Jacques that has become most important. That is what gives me courage to do what I would otherwise want to do, but wouldn't dare. Everything I am doing now is without meaning unless he loves me, too."

She took a step nearer, and seized both my arms in so tight a grip that I winced.

"Don't you understand?" she cried. "That is the only thing that counts for me any more, that I love him, and that he must love me, or what I am doing has no meaning. . . . Life has no meaning."

The handle of the door turned with a grating sound. Before Maria could let go of my arms, the door opened, and General Günther entered.

For a moment we all stood petrified. Then Günther broke the silence.

"What does this mean, Maria?" he asked glacially.

She let go of me, and stepped back.

"*Dieser Mann erzählte mir von seiner Freundin,*" she explained quickly. "He was talking to me about his fiancée. They were planning to be married just before he was taken prisoner. He is lonely for her. I really felt very sorry for him."

"The wife of a German officer has no right to be sorry for an enemy prisoner," Günther roared. "I cannot tolerate such revolting intimacy with this nobody. Go into the other room. I'll speak to you in a minute." And as she started to obey he shouted, "*Heraus mit Dir,*" at me before he remembered to change to French.

"Get out," he told me, speaking now in my language, "and don't come back! I don't want to set eyes on you again! You forget your situation here! Go to your quarters—and if you dare to breathe a word about the reason why I dismissed you, I'll see that you rot in the punishment cells! I won't stand for any gossip! Your work has been thoroughly unsatisfactory also! I shall tell the *Feldwebel* to find me some one who knows what he's about. . . . Well, what are you waiting for? Get out!"

I reported this development to Admiral Beaulieu the next time I saw him. He shrugged his shoulders resignedly.

"It's too bad," he said, "but after all, you could only have delayed the end of your visits to Mme. Günther a few days anyway. We have the window-curtain code, now. We can always communicate with her through that."

The following day, Helmuth came down to our living quarters, and attempted to phrase a sentence in French, but got stuck on what was apparently its key word. After wrinkling his brows for a moment, he asked me the French word for *Eifersucht*. I knew what it meant, of course—jealousy—but I was always careful not to reveal my knowledge of German, so I made him define it, and after a little trouble with his French vocabulary, he finally managed to explain

that he meant the feeling of a man who believed his wife was in love with some one else.

"Oh!" I said, like some one who has suddenly seen the light, "You mean *jealousie*!"

"*Ja, ja,*" said Helmuth. "*Jealousie*! That is right. *Jalousie, jaloux*! I knew the words, but I had forgotten. Well, *mon vieux*, I think my general is jealous of you. Now what have you been doing to his wife while you have been pretending to work in her apartment, that he should be jealous of you?"

"Nonsense!" I said. "Why should a general be jealous of a private, and a prisoner at that? And how could any one suspect Frau Günther of permitting any liberties? It's ridiculous! It's true that he seemed angry because she talked French to me, but what of that? That doesn't mean anything. I talk French to you, too."

"Ah, but," said Helmuth, twisting his ugly face into what he probably meant to be a knowing look, "I am not a young and beautiful woman." (It was hardly a necessary statement.) "And you Frenchmen have a reputation for having a way with the ladies. Come, now . . . what was it? Did you find Frau Günther agreeable?"

"Don't be silly, Helmuth," I said crossly. "There's nothing to it. You must be mistaken. It would be idiotic for your general to be jealous of me."

That was true enough; but I remembered the former scene Maria had reported and thought that it was, perhaps, a fact all the same.

"Maybe," Helmuth said. "Maybe. All I know is that I saw you going out when I came in. And then I heard the General shouting so loudly I thought every one in the castle would hear him. He was telling his wife that she should be ashamed to flirt with the prisoners. She didn't shout. I didn't hear what she said. But he slammed the door, and came out, and then he began to ask me about you.

"I told him that I didn't know you well—I didn't want to say that I knew you best of all, because he was in an angry mood, and you seemed to be the object of it. I was afraid he'd turn on me if I said I knew you well. He said you were 'impossible' and an 'impertinent fellow' and that you had not shown proper respect for his wife.

"I said, 'If he has been rude to Frau Günther, why don't you punish him?' Don't misunderstand me, Lambert, I didn't want to make trouble for you, but from what I heard, I was very sure he wouldn't want to make any public scandal, and I was just sounding him out. Well, he said immediately, 'No, no, I don't want to do that. It is a private matter, not a question of prison discipline. And besides, we have enough trouble with these damned Frenchmen as it is. You'd think they were the masters here.' Well, that settled it. It was obvious that if he were jealous of you, the last thing he'd want to do would be to recognize it publicly by taking any action against you. . . . By the way, if you should ever be asked, remember, I said I didn't know you any better than the others. Don't give me away, or I might get in trouble."

I made a mental note that I had thus gained a slight hold over Helmuth on which I might be able to capitalize later on.

"Oh, I won't give you away," I said. "But I'll be quite frank. I'm not nearly so worried about whether you get into trouble as about whether I do. What do you think—is he likely to try to get at me in any way?"

"I don't think so," Helmuth said. "He can't very well, without letting every one know he's jealous of you. Especially if there wasn't anything really. You're sure about that? He didn't catch you kissing, did he?"

"For goodness sake, Helmuth," I said. "I'm not a high-school boy. And from what little I saw of Frau Günther, I don't think she's the type to be picked up on casual acquaintance."

"Oh, all right," said Helmuth. "But if you're keeping something from me, you're just cheating yourself—because I was going to offer to take a message to Frau Günther for you if you wanted to, the next time I get a day's leave to go to Dresden."

"Ah!" I thought. "That sounds as though Günther went so far as to try to get Helmuth to set a trap for me, to find out if his suspicions had any foundation." And at the same time that I marvelled that he should have so far forgotten his officer's dignity, I asked automatically:

"Dresden? Why Dresden? What's Dresden got to do with it?"

"Because he's packed her off to Dresden, that's why," Helmuth answered, eyeing me narrowly.

Since I had already spotted the clumsy trap in his former sentence, I was prepared to hide the surprise this caused, and I feigned a very natural laugh.

"What! All on my account?" I roared. "That's a good one. I should be flattered!"

"That's what he did," Helmuth said. "I don't suppose he wanted to ask your admiral to let his orderly go. He would have had to explain why, and that would have been embarrassing. So he's sent his wife off to stay with his sister in Dresden. He told her a prison camp is no place for women anyway. I took her bags down this morning. He's going to visit her there once a week or so. I may have to go with him. That would give me a chance to take some word from you—if you want." He winked broadly and offensively.

"No, thanks," I said. "Frau Günther would certainly be astonished if I presumed to send her a message, simply because she had spoken to me kindly while I was working in her apartment. I imagine she'd complain to her husband at once—and you'd probably get in trouble, Helmuth," I finished, intending by this to convince him that I hadn't seen through his ruse, if my supposition was correct.

Helmuth seemed quite contented as he left. I wondered whether he hurried straight off to Günther to tell him that his suspicions were baseless.

I was still a little worried about possible repercussions to myself. The next time I saw the Admiral, I told him about this conversation, and added:

"Do you think, sir, that I'm in any danger from Günther's jealousy? After the case of Kiewitz and Dubert, I wouldn't put anything by the Germans. If they can do that sort of thing in cold blood, how do they act when they're jealous?"

Rensac, who happened to be there, spoke up before the Admiral could answer:

"I don't want to disappoint your romantic imaginings, Lambert, but I don't think you need worry. The two murders were the Ges-

tapo's doing. That isn't Günther's style. He wouldn't dare have to account to his superiors for getting rid of his charges without authorization. And I hardly think he would want to report you to the Gestapo, and go on record as the prison commander who couldn't protect his own wife against the prisoners. I don't believe you will hear any more of this."

The Admiral frowned.

"The annoying thing is," he said, "that now we're out of touch with her completely. And even if she should come back, we can't let Lambert try any means of contacting her again. He's a marked man, now. That would be too dangerous."

"At least, we know that she is near here, with the aim of helping us," Rensac said. "And we know that Pecquot is working for us, too. There is nothing we can do now except wait, and hope that they will find some way of getting to us."

"Excuse me, *mon général*," I said, "but shouldn't we try to be more active than that ourselves—make some effort, for instance, to get in touch with Mme. Günther in Dresden? During the battle of France, I became convinced that it isn't enough simply to limit one's self to what seems to be the possible. I felt that it is necessary to attempt the impossible. If some of our officers had tried that, if the spirit of resistance had been more violent, perhaps the result would have been different. We might not be here today."

Rensac pursed up his lips.

"I felt, too, that the spirit of resistance was not high," he said, "at least, not at the beginning of the war. I don't know about the end. I was already a prisoner then, you know. . . . But I wonder if it was entirely the fault of our officers that they felt as they did? Perhaps it was something profounder, a rottenness in the spirit of our whole people, who had grown too soft. What had become of the old French peasant, who worked hard, and put his money away in his woolen sock, and went to church on Sunday, and didn't need the moving pictures to distract him from his work? What had happened to our workers, who never used to talk such nonsense as an eight-hour day and a 40-hour week before the last war, when the Americans came in with their easy money and their laziness, and infected our hard-

working people? How could you expect our men to fight hard to protect the corrupt, stupid politicians misrunning things at home? The republic had gotten degenerate. Perhaps it would have been better for us if we had gone back to a sterner régime—a dictatorship, or the monarchy. . . . You know what one of my colleagues said to me the other day? I hadn't thought of it before, but it started me thinking. He said that the British had financed the French Revolution, and after that had pushed us back into republicanism every time we tried to return to a monarchy, but they kept their own king, so that they would stay strong and we would stay weak."

"But do you believe that yourself, General?" I asked, surprised.

"I don't know," he said, hesitatingly, "but it makes you think, doesn't it?"

I didn't know what to answer, but he resumed the conversation without noticing my embarrassed silence.

"That's all past, anyhow," he said. "For the future, I have only one wish—and that is to get out of here, and start fighting the Germans again. Now you just said we should do something ourselves. That's an admirable sentiment, but it's just a sentiment unless you have something to propose. Just what do you suggest that we should do?"

"I do have one idea," I said. "Today I saw them unloading food from the freight elevator. It comes out just behind the storage room, you know. I noticed there was no guard at the elevator while they were working there—I don't know the situation at the bottom, but perhaps it is the same there. I suppose they think they don't need one while soldiers are working unloading the food sacks there. Now if we could distract the soldiers' attention in some way, we might be able to go down the elevator."

"And run into the soldiers' arms at the bottom," Beaulieu said, shaking his head. "That won't do, unless we have some way of finding out just what the situation is below."

"But the freight elevator may be the answer, though," said Rensac. "How heavily is it guarded when it isn't being used, Lambert?"

"Only one man up here," I said. "And I noticed that today he didn't show up until quite a while after the soldiers had finished their work and left. They padlocked the door before leaving, though."

"Hmm," mused Rensac. "We might time it to get in between the end of unloading operations and the posting of the guard. Or if there's only one man, we might be able to overpower him. Get a good look at that door, Lambert, and see how difficult it would be to wreck the lock or the door itself. Then we'll talk it over again."

XXXII

Offer of Freedom

"NEWS FROM my wife," Gaston told me triumphantly, waving a letter at me, as I entered the casemate.

"Is that so?" I asked. "Good news?"

"I don't know," he answered, losing his air of triumph. "I don't know what she means."

"Let's see it," I said. There was only one line that seemed to interest us. I read it:

"Scarface has left for a warmer climate."

I didn't know what it meant either, but I reported it to the Admiral the next day.

"I suppose it has some figurative meaning, sir," I said. "I haven't been able to figure it out, though. The letter's from Marseilles. That ought to be warm enough."

The Admiral shook his head.

"I think it means literally what it says," he said. "He's probably gone to Africa. Certainly, the Germans must be interested in Africa. They always were. And if Tellier's still working for them—well, perhaps they have a little job for him there. Unless he's trying to get away from them, of course," he added, apparently as an afterthought. "By the way—any progress on the elevator?"

"Not yet, sir," I said. "I haven't had a chance to take a look."

"Well, I wouldn't put too much hope in it," said the Admiral. "They must take pretty careful precautions. And of course, we don't know how it's guarded below. If we have to knock out a guard, that won't help any, either. Our escape couldn't go undiscovered for long, and we'd probably be caught before we got away. That's also true if we have to do any evident damage to the door. Another thing—

they may remove some essential piece of the machinery when they're not using it. However, it won't do any harm for you to have a look around."

That afternoon, I wandered over behind the storage room, and found the elevator operating, and a group of soldiers wrestling with some heavy packages. I offered to lend them a hand, which permitted me to walk in and out of the elevator, and examine it closely. It seemed to be a simple old-fashioned machine, one of the kind operated simply by a pull-rope. I decided there wasn't anything that could be removed from it, and when they finished I watched closely, and discovered that there was no such precaution taken. They simply closed and padlocked the door. I took occasion, when I thought no one was looking, to feel around it a bit. I found it loose, and decided it could easily be pried open, or the padlock hasp be forced off. Satisfied with my inspection, I started back to our quarters when a German corporal whom I hadn't noticed there fell into step beside me.

"Well, Lambert," he said familiarly, "interested in elevators?"

I was surprised that he knew my name—I had only noticed him once or twice—and annoyed that he seemed to have observed me when I thought I had been very casual about the whole thing.

"Not particularly," I said. "I was just thinking what a rickety old-fashioned thing it is."

"Yes, of course," he said mockingly. "Even unsafe, I would say." And he walked off, leaving me wondering if that had been a warning, which it certainly seemed to be, or if I were exaggerating because of my own sense of guilt.

I wasn't left in doubt long. Just before lights out, I was summoned to Lieutenant Greffe's office. When I was brought in, he wasted no time in coming to the point.

"Well, Lambert," he said, "I hear that you are interested in elevators. Not thinking of taking an unauthorized ride in one, are you?"

"Of course not, sir," I stammered, embarrassed. I felt my face grow red, but I couldn't help it.

"Just remember, we have our eye on you," Greffe said. "I believe we've had a little trouble with you before, haven't we?"

"Why, no sir," I said. "I don't believe so. I can't remember anything."

He might, I thought, be referring to the Maria Günther episode, but no official action had ever been taken about that, and I didn't know if he had even heard about it.

"Perhaps I'm mistaken," Greffe said. "I may have confused you with some one else. Well, I'm sorry to hear you aren't interested in leaving us, Lambert. I was just thinking of making you an offer." He spoke mockingly.

"I didn't say that I wanted to stay here indefinitely, sir," I answered.

"That was rather the thought of the corporal who noticed you inspecting the elevator," Greffe said dryly. "I wouldn't advise you to try that way out though. Even if you got into the elevator, which I doubt you could, you might have more trouble getting out of it. We have a few guards down below, you know, and they're not very formal about holding long conversations before they shoot. You might leave us with most regrettable permanence. . . . However, if you're so eager to get away, there are, you know, ways and means."

They had me spotted, evidently, but of course they couldn't know that I had been investigating for any of the officers.

"What do you mean by ways and means, sir?" I asked.

"Simply this: if you want to get back to France and your home town—you're from Paris, aren't you—delightful city!—you have only to sign a declaration that you will never again bear arms against us, and I believe that we can secure your release. It's only a formality, after all. The fighting's over."

"This time," I said.

"There will be no next time," Lieutenant Greffe said, quite calmly. I had expected him to become angry. "We are not so stupid as to give you a chance for revenge. That was where you made your little mistake when you had your chance against us. Never fear, we shall profit by the example. Well, what do you say?"

The offer surprised me. I understood it, made to generals, whose moral surrender could be of value to the Germans, because of the great influence of their example. But I knew that no orderly had been offered such a chance, and I could think of only one explanation—that was, that Günther had thought of this means of getting me out of the camp, so he could bring Maria back again. That was

at least heartening, in that it indicated that he did not relish her absence in Dresden and might, perhaps, bring her back later, jealous or not.

"I am sorry," I said. "Signing such a letter is contrary to the French military code. I could be punished in my own country for accepting. Besides, I don't want to leave my Admiral."

"It's very silly of you," Greffe said. "I thought you more intelligent. If Generals Tellier and Bancard were willing to sign, why shouldn't a simple orderly do so? Should you have more scruples than your generals? You should be flattered. You are the only orderly to whom such a privilege has been offered. You should appreciate it."

"Why is it being offered to me, and not to the others?" I asked, in as ingenuous a tone as I could manage.

"Because we choose to do so," Greffe answered shortly. "It is our privilege to offer freedom to any one we pick, and we do not give our reasons. If you are afraid of punishment in France, I think we can guarantee you that you will not be troubled. What do you say?"

"I will think it over," I said. "But I do not think I will change my mind."

Greffe rose to his feet.

"It is unnecessary for you to think it over," he said. "The offer is withdrawn. It is not likely that you will have such an opportunity again."

I reported the conversation in detail to my Admiral, of course, and he and his two general friends discussed it, and found little difficulty in coming to a common conclusion about it.

"I'm afraid your elevator escape idea was still-born, Lambert," General Verger said. "It's too easy. They certainly are prepared for attempts there."

"I think we can deduce one thing at least from what happened. Since the Maria Günther episode, you are probably being very carefully watched. Therefore we must be cautious about using you. However, there's certainly no reason why they should suspect that you were acting for us when you looked over the elevator. They haven't any inkling of our present ideas, I don't suppose.

"As for your own case, I should say that it seems to be more or

less assured that Günther isn't likely to take any strong action against you. In the first place, it would be beneath his dignity to appear to be jealous of you. Secondly, if he's anxious to get you out of here, it must be because he wants to bring Maria back. And since Helmuth must have given him a favorable report, perhaps he will do that one of these days, anyhow. We'll watch her windows, and hope."

The days passed slowly, and then the weeks. There was no news from Maria, and the curtains in her window remained at their normal position. There were no further signs that Günther was still worried about me. Helmuth had announced once that he was going to Dresden, and asked if I was sure I didn't want a message sent. I refused, and he didn't ask again. Apparently, he was satisfied that I was concealing nothing.

Spring came, and the trees put out their new leaves. The softer breezes of the spring air seemed to accentuate the loneliness of our lot, especially when we had to go into our casemates and be shut up in their stifling atmosphere while it was still light outside.

I felt particularly lonely because I could not speak to my best friends among the orderlies, Renier and Gaston, of the plans of escape which filled my thoughts. The desire to get out did not diminish because no way appeared to do so. I often discussed the possibilities with the three officers, but we seemed to be talking more to keep up hope than for any other reason—and sometimes because it gave us a chance to talk of Maria, whom I alone had met, but whom the two generals and the admirals felt they knew also, and about whom it was pleasant to think. She was a beautiful woman, and we were men without women, burdened by the spring.

One day in April, I entered Admiral Beaulieu's room to find the three officers with their heads together over a letter Beaulieu had just received from his wife.

"You're a clever fellow, Lambert," Rensac said. "Come here and see if you can help us with this. There's a passage that has us stuck."

They quickly reviewed for me what they had already succeeded in translating from the prearranged code: Tellier was in Africa, as we had guessed from Gaston's letter, sent there by Pétain on a special mission suggested by the Germans, about which Mme. Beaulieu

either knew nothing or couldn't tell us through the code. Pecquot was still in Switzerland, and had been in touch with Maria in Dresden. We were to have patience and realize that we had not been forgotten, and that our friends were still working for us. Then came the passage which had baffled the officers.

It was preceded with the sign that indicated a code sentence, but it made no sense in our code.

"Be sure to have your teeth checked from time to time," it read. "Such things have to be taken care of before it's too late."

"Mme. Beaulieu has an obsession about teeth, and she's always reminding me not to neglect mine," the Admiral said. "I would think that was all she meant, if it weren't for that code sign before it."

"Could she possibly be referring to General Dens?" Verger asked.

General Dens was one of the collaborationist prisoners. His name was pronounced like the French word for teeth (*dents*).

"Perhaps," said Rensac doubtfully. "Let's keep an eye on him in any case."

"Can you think of anything, Lambert?" Beaulieu asked.

"There's only one thing I can think of sir," I said. "Do you remember when we wanted to tell Mme. Verger to watch for Mme. Beaulieu, and we put a phrase in a letter that wouldn't mean anything to her at the time, but which she would understand when Mme. Beaulieu appeared? Perhaps this is the same sort of message. We must be alert to wait for something to happen that will give it sense."

Several days passed. The generals, who were watching the General Dens clue, reported nothing. He seemed a thoroughly ordinary, and thoroughly dull, person, with no conceivable connection with any possibilities of escape. Then one day, one of the orderlies made a remark in the casemate that made me prick up my ears.

"This new dentist is much better than the man we had here before," he was telling a friend. "He did some work on me today. He has the old military dentist beat to a frazzle. He's a civilian, from Dresden, not one of those Army butchers."

A new dentist! From Dresden! Suddenly, I thought I understood Mme. Beaulieu's letter. She wanted to tell her husband to see the new dentist, who would bring a message from Maria in Dresden.

I hastened to tell my theory to the Admiral. He was quite excited about it.

"Lambert, I believe you've hit it!" he said. "If he's been appointed recently, perhaps it was on purpose to get into the fortress. Maria must have engineered it, and perhaps she has some news from Pecquot, which he will pass on to us. I'll go to see him on his next visit here. When will that be?"

"He comes once a week, sir," I said. "He's due next Wednesday."

"Good!" the Admiral said. "Put me down for an appointment on his next visit."

"Have you any teeth that need attention, sir?" I asked.

"No," said the Admiral, "but that doesn't matter. It's only an excuse to get in to see him anyway."

"I could go for you, sir," I said. "I need to have some work done. I could find out if he really has a message."

"No, Lambert," the Admiral said, "I'd better go myself. It's probably my name he knows, since the news came from my wife. If we've guessed wrong, of course he'll just tell me I'm mistaken about having bad teeth, and that will be that."

Startling news came over the German radio. A brief announcement was made that Rudolf Hess had disappeared.

"What do you suppose could have happened to him?" Verger asked. "How can a man like Hess drop out of sight unnoticed?"

"I don't suppose he did," Beaulieu snorted. "They probably know very well where he is. If he had simply disappeared, they would have kept it quiet. They wouldn't want any scandal about the Number Two Nazi. They must be trying to cover something up."

"Something rotten in Naziland," Rensac added laconically.

Among the orderlies, the news of Hess's disappearance was received humorously. We didn't quite know why, but it struck us as a good joke. All day, whenever we found ourselves in hearing of a German soldier, we kept saying to one another, in a loud tone, "Have you seen Rudolf?" Some of them scowled at us. Others pretended not to understand.

It was in the evening that we scored our greatest effect.

I went into the canteen with Renier. There was no one there except the canteen keeper.

"Let's have a little fun with him," Renier whispered, and started pushing aside the empty wooden cases which were piled up in one corner, and looking behind them, while I got down on my hands and knees and peered under the table.

The canteen keeper was immediately intrigued.

"What are you fellows looking for?" he asked, coming out from behind his counter.

We looked up at him with our faces, we hoped, beaming with innocence.

"We're looking for Rudolf," we chorused.

To our surprise, tears started from his eyes.

"You have no right to joke about this!" he exploded, in a trembling voice. "The loss of *unser lieber Rudolf*, *unser arme Rudolf*—it is the most terrible thing that has happened to Germany since the war!"

And suddenly he started to sob like a child. Turning his back abruptly, he hurried behind the counter, and took refuge among the confused piles of his stock.

Renier and I looked at each other in astonishment. I jerked my head towards the door, and we both tiptoed out, abashed at the exaggerated success of our experiment.

"Well!" I exclaimed, as we got outside, "I certainly never expected that! A grown man crying like a child!"

"They're a curious people," said Renier. "No sense of humor. Everything's dead serious with them. No wonder they think we're a degenerate nation because we make jokes about our President's big feet."

XXXIII

Dental Care

ON THE day of the dentist's visit to Königstein, Admiral Beaulieu, who had never showed the slightest trepidation on going into action, appeared distinctly nervous.

"I haven't been to a dentist for years," he explained. "Of course, there's nothing wrong with my teeth, and I'm not going to have anything done to them anyway, but the very sight of a dentist's office makes me shudder. . . . Oh, well, it's in a good cause. I imagine I can forget the surroundings, if only he brings us good news."

Rensac and Verger decided to wait in the Admiral's room to find out what sort of a message the dentist might be bringing. I was intrigued, too, so after doing a few errands, I went to the Admiral's room in time, I judged, to be there when he returned. But he hadn't come back, and I had to kill some little time pretending to put his room in order before he entered, after more than an hour's absence.

Rensac and Verger rose expectantly as he came in, but the Admiral didn't speak. He sank quickly into a chair, looked at me sourly, and then, with apparent difficulty, said thickly:

"Ah, Lambert! You were the genius who interpreted that passage about teeth in my wife's letter, I believe!"

"Why, yes, sir," I stammered. "What's the matter? Is anything wrong?"

The Admiral laid his closed fist on the table; then, slowly, he opened his fingers, disclosing two large molars on the palm.

"Lambert," he said, "you owe me two teeth. I'm sure I don't know what keeps me from collecting them right now."

Rensac broke into a guffaw and Verger grinned widely.

"Very funny," said the Admiral bitterly, "very funny indeed. Perhaps you'd like to have a good laugh too, Lambert?"

"I don't understand, sir. What happened?" I asked, acutely embarrassed.

"Nothing that helps us out any," the Admiral said. "I don't think that fellow ever heard of Maria. As for me, I've had two teeth pulled." He worked his jaw gingerly about. "My whole face is sore," he complained. "If you want to hear the story, get me something to gargle with first. Talking is no pleasure at the moment, I assure you."

I put some salt in a glass of water, and the Admiral retired to the rear of the room to minister to his wounded jaw. When he turned around again, he looked a little more composed. He even smiled faintly.

"I suppose it is funny, if it doesn't happen to be your own teeth," he said. "In fact, I got a little humor out of the thing myself at the beginning. The dentist is a comical little fellow. If you can imagine a German Marseillais, that might give you an idea. He was all over the room, nervous, excited, gesturing, laughing at his own jokes, and, just to cap it all, talking French which not only had a German accent, but a Marseilles accent too! The impression of meridional exaggeration was so strong that I asked him if he hadn't lived there—it was the only way I could account for the accent—and it turned out that he had. He had spent five years in Marseilles as a dental technician, had learned to speak French there, and apparently had learned to mimic the mannerisms of the Midi while he was about it. I don't know what impression he makes on his compatriots, but he certainly made a curious enough one on me.

"Well, he got me into the chair, still talking incessantly about Marseilles, with gestures so sweeping that I had to dodge them once or twice. I wondered when in the world he was coming to the point. Then it occurred to me that perhaps he didn't realize who I was.

"By the way, doctor," I said, "I don't know if you caught my name. I'm Admiral Beaulieu."

"Yes, yes," he said. "Beaulieu—that's right, isn't it?"

"Correct," I said, and when that still didn't seem to cause any stir of recollection, I went on, although I felt like an idiot repeating my name over and over, "Beaulieu. B-E-A-U-L-I-E-U."

"He flung his arms up into the air, nearly taking off my nose with the point of his probe, which he had picked up by then.

"'Of course, of course,' he exclaimed. 'Where's my head! To think I didn't remember! The famous Admiral Beaulieu! Every one has heard of *you*, Admiral!'

"'Well,' I thought, 'he's got it at last. It took him long enough. Queer sort of a messenger to pick—but I suppose there wasn't any choice.'

"As he turned around and began to busy himself with his instruments, I thought I had better get him started on what I'd come for, so I said: 'No doubt you've heard of my wife also, Mme. Beaulieu?'

"'Yes, indeed,' he answered, bobbing his head up and down rapidly. 'And how is Madame Beaulieu? And how are the children?' And he burst into a roar of laughter, though for the life of me I couldn't figure out what he was laughing at.

"'Well, you know, I don't have much chance to check up myself, shut up here,' I said. 'It might be easier for you to give me news of my wife than for me to give you news of her.'

"With that he went off into a perfect gale of laughter, as though I had just said something tremendously witty. Suddenly he stopped short, wrinkled up his brows as though he had just encountered some terrifically difficult thought, and asked: 'Are you descended from Napoleon's famous general, Beaulieu?'

"'Not so far as I know,' I answered. 'In fact, I never heard of a Napoleonic general of that name. Was there one?'

"'Maybe not, maybe not,' he wheezed, as though that too were excruciatingly comical. 'Perhaps I'm wrong. But I know I've heard that name before somewhere. Now where did I hear something about some one named Beaulieu?'

"And he screwed up his eye in an exaggerated wink, as though he and I were enjoying hugely the secret of where he had heard that name before. I supposed that was his way of covering up his game.

"'Now, Admiral,' he went on, 'let's get down to the subject. After all, we both know why you came here today.' Another roaring laugh. 'It wasn't about Napoleon or his generals, was it? No, of course not. It was about *teeth*, wasn't it? Let's talk about *teeth*.'

"He accented the word heavily both times, and since my head was full of it as the code word in the letter, I took it as the signal that he was about to deliver his message, especially as he bent over me and started whispering mysteriously.

"Now let's see where the nasty little tooth is,' he said, as though he were talking to a four-year-old. 'Open your mouth and tell me where it hurts—or maybe you'd better tell me first and open your mouth afterwards,' and he roared with laughter again.

"Well, I thought it was all part of the plan. Perhaps he suspected microphones or possible intrusions, and he was going to whisper into my ear while he appeared to be working on my teeth. So I said something vague about having had some trouble with the lower molars on the right side, and he peered in at them, shook his head sorrowfully, clucked his tongue three or four times, and said sorrowfully, '*Très, très mauvais*. Yes, very, very bad.'

"Then he leaned over me, and said, in a confidential tone of voice, 'There's only one thing to do with the bad fellows, that's to get rid of them completely, don't you agree, Admiral?'

"I thought he meant the Nazis, and agreed.

"Just lean your head back against the rest, Admiral,' he said, and as I did, he bent over me and started whispering, so low that I was straining to hear him when damned if he didn't clap the gas cone over my face. Well, I was so surprised I took a deep gasp of it—and I was a goner. Before I could recover enough composure to object, I had gone under—and the next thing I knew, there was this fellow waving the two teeth under my nose and saying, 'See, Admiral, see how bad they were? You'll be much better off without them.' He shoved them into my hand—I don't know why I took them—and here they are. As a matter of fact, they don't look too healthy. I can't understand it. My teeth have always been all right. I've never needed to go to a dentist."

"Maybe you just never wanted to go to a dentist," Verger insinuated. "Maybe you didn't do so badly after all. If it hadn't been for your error, you wouldn't ever have had those teeth out—and it looks to me as though they were long overdue."

"Unless that Boche of a Marseillais gave me some one else's teeth so I wouldn't know he took out two good ones," Beaulieu said. "My

teeth never troubled me." He smiled at me. "And don't take it to heart, Lambert," he added. "I don't hold it against you. I insisted on going myself."

As we left the room, leaving the Admiral gargling again, Rensac asked: "But if Mme. Beaulieu didn't mean she was sending a message by the dentist, what did she mean?"

"It may seem like a startling theory," Verger said, "but my guess is that she meant just what she said—that this would be a good opportunity for Beaulieu to get his teeth attended to—no more, no less. She probably knows how much stock to take in that theory of his that his teeth are so good he doesn't need to go to a dentist. That wasn't code—that was in clear."

"But," I objected, "there was a code sign before that passage."

"Possibly a slip of the pen," said Verger, "or possibly—just possibly—Mme. Beaulieu thought that was the only way to get her husband to a dentist."

Towards the end of the month, we had another of our cinema performances in the village. We were, as usual, well guarded, and though I studied the tunnel and its approaches carefully during the trip with an eye to escape possibilities, I didn't succeed in finding any.

The film had hardly started when the image suddenly blacked out, and we were left sitting in the darkness. I supposed that the film had broken, but there was a pause of several minutes during which it wasn't resumed, and finally the house lights went up, and the operator (who was also, I knew, the owner of the little theatre) came out of the projection box and spoke to one of the guards, who then asked in French if any of us knew anything about projectors.

As a former moving picture cameraman, I was more familiar with cameras, but I also knew something about projectors, so I volunteered to help. The guard followed me to the projection box, and watched suspiciously while I took off my coat, hung it over a chair, and delved into the machine. The theatre owner, who spoke French fairly well, apologized for his ineptness, but said that his operators had all gone to war, and that he did not know much about the machines.

"How lucky to find some one who understands them," he said. "Were you an operator in civil life?"

"No," I said. "I was a cameraman, though."

"How interesting! We're colleagues in a way, then. May I ask your name?"

"Lambert," I said, shortly. It seemed to me he was showing an unnecessary amount of interest in me. I didn't know why, and I was suspicious. So was the guard apparently. He had his ears cocked for every word.

"Mine is Fliegert," he said, "Otto Fliegert." He seemed set on making friends with me, but I didn't want any Nazi friends.

"There you are," I said, straightening up. "It will run now."

It really had been simple enough to fix, for any one who knew such machines, but I judged that breakdowns must be fairly common. The projector was badly worn, and probably new parts weren't easy to get.

Herr Fliegert thanked me over-effusively as the guard took me back to my seat. Then the film continued, and I swore at myself for having fixed the projector. This time it was a pure dose of propaganda they had prepared for us.

The background story was a sentimental love tale about a German-American girl who comes to Germany on a visit to her cousins. Its real object, however, was very obviously to contrast Nazi with democratic ideas to the detriment of the latter. The girl starts out in Germany by making stupid criticisms of the German system, which are received with smilingly tolerant superiority, followed by demonstrations of her errors which oblige her each time to admit the greater wisdom of the Nazi scheme of things. Finally, she meets and falls in love with a dashing young SS squadron leader, whose manly bearing she contrasts with the inevitably degenerate appearance of her American friends. He schools her in the Nazi views on love and in German *Weltanschauung*. She renounces America to marry him, and after he has died a glorious death for the Führer, she dedicates herself to the service of Nazism and the duty of bringing the triumph of its splendid ideas to her native country.

There were many expressions of disgust from the officers as we

made the long wearisome climb up the tunnel to the camp, the consensus being that it wasn't worth the trouble to see pictures of that nature. It had been too much for even the collaborationists to swallow, although they were quieter about it, but from their glum expressions, it was easy to guess that they had not been amused.

A thought struck me as we toiled up through the tunnel.

"Do you remember, Admiral," I gasped, for the ascent had left me a little short of breath, "it was exactly a year ago today that we were on the beach at Dunkirk, preparing to sail to England."

"Wish we had stayed there," said Beaulieu, economizing words and breath. "Could have done more to win the war from there—then cooped up here."

"Then we'd be—with de Gaulle now," I ventured.

De Gaulle's name wasn't mentioned often in our camp. Even the anti-collaborationists weren't very happy about the fact that all the high officers in the Army had been wrong about mechanized warfare and de Gaulle had been right. Some of them considered him something of an upstart, since he had taken leadership in the move for continued resistance, although he had only been a colonel until a few weeks before the armistice.

"Think we—underestimated de Gaulle," the Admiral puffed. Then he mustered up his last reserve of breath for one furious final blast: "Damn it, Lambert, how the devil do you expect me to carry on a conversation while I'm crawling up the insides of this blasted mountain! Shut up!"

I shut up.

The weather was clear and bright. From their perch on top of Königstein, the generals could watch the movements along the roads and railroads that passed through the valleys below them. And those movements intrigued them mightily. For now the roads were full of tanks and motorized equipment, train succeeded train on the railroad on the far side of the Elbe—too distant for much detail to be seen, but occasionally a series of snouts of big guns thrusting ominously upward from a string of flat cars would make it plain what sort of traffic was being carried.

The generals debated at length the destination of these forces. If

there had actually been some new campaign, they argued, that would have been carried on some of the news reports put on the camp loud-speakers. Therefore it must be that Germany was preparing a new attack on some one.

After days of argument, the officers finally succeeded in coming to almost complete agreement on what the movements portended. Germany, they decided, must be preparing to invade Turkey.

It was not until more than a month later that I learned what the combined wisdom of all these brilliant military brains had failed to realize: That Hitler had been preparing to attack Russia!

XXXIV

Release

FINISHING HIS breakfast, the Admiral said to me:

"Ask Verger and Rensac to come in here. I have another code letter from my wife, and we might as well all put our heads together over it."

I called the two generals in.

"*Bonjour, Beaulieu,*" said Verger. "Another letter from your wife? If it involves going to the dentist, just count me out. A little more correspondence like that, and we won't have a tooth among us."

"All right," said Beaulieu. "Have your little joke. There's nothing about dentists in this one. I've worked it out already, but I thought you might want to check it, to make sure I haven't missed any possible interpretation. Here, look it over while I tell you what I make of it."

He passed the letter to Rensac, continuing:

"She is sending us a message which Maria sent through Pecquot to her."

"That's a roundabout way to get a message from Dresden!" Verger commented. "Germany to Switzerland to France to Germany again!"

"It's roundabout, all right," Beaulieu said, "but perhaps the Swiss step was omitted. If I read it correctly, Pecquot has actually seen Maria in Dresden, so he must have been that close to us—imagine! I have no idea how he could have done it."

"What's the message itself?" Rensac asked.

"It is that we are to be sure not to miss the next moving picture show. Somehow or other on that occasion we will get word from her."

"But what about this?" Verger broke in. "Here's a reference to Lambert. What does that mean?"

"It's not too clear," Beaulieu answered. "That's the code word for Lambert, all right, and the next two coded words mean 'back' and 'door.' My guess would be that during the moving picture show, Lambert is to station himself somewhere near the back door to receive a message."

"Why Lambert especially?" Verger asked.

"Perhaps because they figure he's less conspicuous," Beaulieu suggested. "Or perhaps because he's the only one of us Maria knows by sight. There's no way we can know what they have in mind, beyond what they tell us."

"I should hardly think Maria would dare come herself," Rensac objected.

"She might have described him to her messenger," Beaulieu answered. "Or perhaps it is just because they think it would be easier to get in touch with Lambert unnoticed than with one of us. I hope they're right about that. I hope he isn't still being watched because of Günther's jealousy. That would make Maria a very bad messenger to communicate with him. But the letter doesn't say she's coming herself, and I imagine we'll simply get a note of some kind from her."

"Why do you suppose they're going to all that trouble, then, instead of using our code?" Rensac asked.

"That's easy," Verger said. "Our code isn't bad, considering how quickly we had to work it out, and the disadvantages of having to include our messages in what look like normal letters. But perhaps they have details of an escape plan which they must be sure we understand perfectly, and which requires considerable explaining. Since we have to write a long letter to get over a short message, any very complicated instructions would be almost impossible to send in our code. My guess is that this time they have the plan worked out—and that is what we can expect to receive."

At that moment, there was a knock on the door. Beaulieu hastily slipped the letter into his pocket. The first thought that went through my head was that perhaps the gramophone, which had been playing away as usual all through this conversation, hadn't masked it suffi-

ciently. It was not at all normal for any one except the two generals already in the room to call at this hour, and for that reason all of us, our heads filled with plots of escape, started guiltily.

Beaulieu opened the door. Admiral Level stood outside. Usually calm, he had for this once the air of some one impatient to impart momentous tidings.

"I'm not intruding?" he asked, noting the two generals.

"No, no, not at all," Beaulieu said, hiding his surprise. Level had not been on very good terms with the non-collaborationists lately, and his visit was unexpected.

Four persons quite filled the small room, and I started to leave, to make room for Admiral Level. At the same time, Verger and Rensac moved for the door, with the result that we got ourselves somewhat confusedly jammed in the entrance.

"Please," Level said, "don't disturb yourselves, gentlemen. I won't come in. I only stopped to give Admiral Beaulieu some news which will certainly interest him. I have just been told it has been decided that all Navy prisoners are to be released."

"Released!" Beaulieu exclaimed. "That's curious. Why the Navy only, and not the others?"

"The prison office says that it's a gesture of appreciation for Admiral Darlan's cooperation with Germany," Level said.

"Then they might as well release the Army officers to thank the Marshal," Beaulieu said drily. "When is all this supposed to happen?"

"I didn't hear any definite date," Level said. "Apparently the order is expected to come through some time before the end of the month . . . Good day, gentlemen. Sorry to have disturbed you. I thought the Admiral would want to know."

"So!" said Beaulieu, as Level disappeared, closing the door and sitting down again. "Darlan works for the enemy, so I get my freedom. I don't know that I'll take it. What do you think? Should I make a gesture of disapproval of collaborationism by refusing to accept my release for that reason?"

"What good would it do?" Verger asked. "It's a chance to get out and work against them. Also you can get in touch with Pecquot and try to get us out of here. Judging from Level's report, I should

say that it's unconditional release. You won't have to sign any guarantee not to work against the Germans. Perhaps Darlan signed one for the whole Navy—but that needn't bind you."

"Yes," Beaulieu said, "I can work for you outside—but in the meantime, isn't this going to upset whatever may have been planned already?"

"How so?" Rensac asked.

"Because," said Beaulieu, "if they're letting all Navy prisoners out, that means Lambert, too. And Lambert is the man they plan to get Maria's message to. And the release is expected before the end of the month. And there won't be another moving picture performance until the end of the month. Now is it clear?"

"Of course, of course," Rensac said. "Should have thought of that myself. Let's see, now . . . Verger, how about your orderly? Couldn't he take Lambert's place? He's reliable, isn't he?"

Verger nodded.

"What do you think of him, Lambert?" he asked.

"Perfectly trustworthy," I said. "But he'll need careful instructions. He isn't always very quick on the uptake."

"There's another difficulty," Verger said. "They're expecting Lambert. We'll have to warn them of the change. We can send word through Mme. Beaulieu, but God knows if it will get to Dresden in time. Then, too, if Maria counted on describing Lambert to her messenger, she'll be at a loss now, because she doesn't know what Gaston looks like. If they fail to identify him, they may be afraid to give him the message. We didn't make any provision for describing persons in our code."

"It can't be helped," said Beaulieu. "I will simply have to write that Lambert may not be available, and that Gaston will substitute. And I'll try to figure out some sign of recognition which will be practical for him to use, and describable in the code. That's the best we can do."

"By the way," said Rensac. "When you go, what happens to our contact? Mme. Beaulieu can't very well write to us—that would attract attention."

"No difficulty there," Beaulieu said. "Mme. Verger can continue to use the code. General Verger will get the letters instead of myself,

that's all. But I don't like the idea too much, gentlemen, of dropping our escape plans in the middle, and going off, leaving you two in the air."

"Nonsense," said Rensac. "Your departure simplifies our problem—one less man to get out, and two more who know the routine outside to help. You're going to take the chance while you have it. That's that. Let's not argue about it any more . . . I'm going out and get some air. It's stifling in here. How about it, Verger?"

The two generals went out. Beaulieu walked over to the window, his hands clasped behind his back, and gazed out for a few moments in silence. Then, musingly, without turning, he said: "Well, Lambert, it seems that we are going back to France. How does that make you feel?"

"I will be happy to see France again, and Paris again," I said. "And yet I don't know if I wouldn't almost rather remain here until there are no more Germans in France, and no more Frenchmen spying on Frenchmen on their own soil. I would be glad to see the old free France again, but I know it won't be like that. I'm afraid it will be a sad sight, sir. Now that it seems likely we will soon return, I'm—a little frightened, sir."

Beaulieu didn't speak for another moment. Then he said softly: "I am frightened, too, Lambert. I am frightened, too."

XXXV

The Real France

OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION of the news of the release of the naval prisoners came two days after Admiral Level's report. Navy personnel was ordered to assemble at 3 P.M., and General Günther himself appeared, with a paper in his hand.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I have good news for you."

And screwing his monocle into his eye, he read the text of an agreement between Germany and France, signed by Admiral Darlan, under which all French Navy personnel in German prisons was to be released on June 19.

Having finished the reading, Günther continued:

"Gentlemen, before you leave us, I would like to say one last word to you on behalf of the Führer. I have explained to you already that my country bears no ill will towards yours; this agreement is one sign of that. Our dearest desire is that you cooperate with us for the establishment of the New Order in Europe, and share the power and prosperity that will be ours. Tomorrow, our two nations jointly will be the masters of Europe. Some of you have been skeptical. You have not been willing to believe that the nation you considered your enemy, after having beaten you on the field of battle, should show herself so generous as to return the fruits of victory, and to hold out the hand of fellowship.

"But your chief, Admiral Darlan, has understood. You should have confidence in his judgment. He is in a better position than you, gentlemen, to know all the facts of the case. You can thank him and his understanding for your release. I hope this act will convince you that we really want to be your friends—your best friends, even though you forced us to be your severest friends. I hope that this will be

only the beginning of the reconciliation which will enable us to understand one another better. I hope that when you return to France, two weeks hence, you will carry with you the memory of what I have said today, and will go back to your homes as bearers of the new spirit of friendship and cooperation between France and Germany."

Back in the casemate, we Navy orderlies had to stand some kidding from the Army men, though, as a matter of fact, much less than I had expected. We were very much in the minority—there were only a few admirals at Königstein—and I had expected that some of the others might be envious of us. But if they were, they hid it admirably. A few jokes were made about how we had become Darlanized, and how the Navy hereafter would sail only on Vichy water, but it was good-natured joking. Perhaps it was partly because our release raised hopes that perhaps others might follow.

"Will you look up my wife if you can?" Gaston asked me. "She's at Marseilles, with Mme. Verger, and as Mme. Beaulieu is there, too, I suppose your Admiral will be taking you there."

"No, no, don't ask Lambert that!" Renier broke in, with mock alarm. "He's not the chap to send to see your wife. He's too much of a ladies' man. What's this Helmuth has been telling me about you making up to the general's wife, Lambert?"

"Just a silly idea he has," I said. "There's nothing to it."

"Ah!" said Renier. "By the way, Lambert, there's another little problem. Do you know that you and I are going to wreck the snail market when we leave?"

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Well, just for fun," Renier said, "ever since they made me keeper of the snail pen, I've been noting the number of snails each of us has been bringing in—and you're the champion. I'm number three myself, so when we two go, the snail supply per capita is going to drop off alarmingly."

"And why are you telling me this just now?" I asked. "Are you going to propose that I stay behind to keep the commissary department up to par?"

"No, no," Renier said. "No particular reason for telling you now. There was one for not mentioning it before, though. I didn't want

you to get too conceited over your prowess. You hunters do too much boasting if you get any encouragement. And you're quite a hunter, Don Juan Lambert, of snails, and perhaps of bigger game."

"I wish there were some bigger game around," I said, whereupon the conversation took a turn that had better not be reported.

The few preparations we had to make to leave Königstein were soon completed, and we waited for the day of departure for what seemed interminable hours, since there was now no point in doing anything except to go through the motions of the daily routine. The monotony was unrelieved by any further messages from outside. We assumed that we were receiving no news because anything that remained to be told us would be covered by the expected message from Maria. Admiral Beaulieu had written his wife, telling her that he was coming home (that much he was able to write openly), that Gaston would assume my rôle, and that any messages likely to arrive after the 19th should be included in letters from Mme. Verger to her husband.

After I had sounded Gaston out, and found him willing to replace me, I brought him with me to see Admiral Beaulieu. His own officer, General Verger, was also there, and he was told what was expected of him, though the officers did not go into all the details for his benefit, judging that it was not necessary or advisable that he should know too much. Gaston seemed quite flattered at being taken into the confidence of the officers. Like most of the other orderlies, he had noticed that I was apparently on much closer terms with them than was normal for an orderly, and he now began to understand why. There had been times when I had been the butt of a jealous remark or two from some of my comrades, but there had never been any real ill will about it, especially as most of them recognized that it was because of my more complete education that I was able to talk to the officers more freely than they could. Only one or two—Renier, for instance—knew that I had held higher rank before, and they kept it to themselves.

Helmuth came down to see me one day, after the announcement of the impending release, to wish me good luck, and to say, with typical German sentimentality, which showed a decenter side of his

character than I had seen before, that he would miss his conversations with me.

"After the war is over," he said, "I would like to get a job as a waiter in Paris again. It would be nice to work at the Ritz. You must have good connections, Lambert. Be a good fellow and arrange for a job for me?"

I said I would try, though I neither had any likelihood of being able to get any one such a place or any desire to introduce one more German into France.

"You know, Lambert," Helmuth went on, "I went to Dresden with the General the other day. He wanted to see the Frau General. Do you know what the Frau General is doing now? Nursing! She is in a hospital for the wounded. You should see her in her white uniform. She is really better looking than ever."

I could feel his eyes fixed closely on me, and I said, as carelessly as I could, to dispell any suspicions he might still feel:

"And how does the General feel about that? I should think so jealous a man wouldn't like the idea of a pretty wife spending her time ministering to so many strange men."

"I don't think he likes it very much," Helmuth said, "but what can he say? It's war work, and a general's wife has to do something. And I think he feels she's safer there, where all the men she meets are disabled, than here, where they're up and about—maybe too much about."

And he cast a significant glance at me.

"Look here, Helmuth," I said, "when are you going to get that nonsense out of your head about there being something between the General's wife and myself? Look! I'll prove to you that it's nonsense. You probably saw her on occasions when she could have given you a message, didn't you?"

"Oh, yes," said Helmuth. "Many times."

"All right. And she didn't ask you to take any word to me, did she?"

"No," said Helmuth.

"Well, there you are!" I exclaimed. "That proves she's not interested in me."

"All it proves," said Helmuth, "is that she didn't want to send a message by me. After all, I'm her husband's orderly. Might be she didn't trust me." And he gave me a broad wink.

"Oh, nonsense," I said roughly. "You know it's idiotic just as much as I do. You're only trying to get a rise out of me."

But I had found out, without giving myself away, what I had really wanted to know—that she had made no attempt to send some message to me through Helmuth, even without his understanding it, perhaps by telling him something that he might report to me which would mean nothing to him but something to me. Apparently she hadn't. There was nothing to do except wait for the next moving picture show.

A few days before we were due to leave, I made a point of calling on Generals Verger and Rensac, not knowing whether I would have an opportunity of seeing them again before our departure. I went to see Rensac first, and told him that I hoped I would have the pleasure soon of welcoming him back to France.

"*Merci, mon petit,*" he said. "I hope you will have, too. I am anxious to get back in the harness again. I am not discouraged by what has happened in France, or by what is happening elsewhere in the outside world. The word 'France' has an ever-deepening meaning in my mind. I have no interest today in politics. I am only interested in the future of France. I know she *has* a future."

"I'm sure you're right, *mon général,*" I said, "but can we ignore politics altogether? In fact, didn't politics contribute to the downfall of France? Isn't it important to avoid repeating the same mistakes in the future? And doesn't that mean finding the right sort of politics to save France and rebuild her in a better form?"

"Perhaps we mean the same thing, *mon petit,* even if we don't speak the same language. Remember my words, *La France sera plus belle que jamais!* France will be more beautiful than ever!"

General Verger, whose steadfast uncompromising spirit had always been my admiration, congratulated me warmly on my good luck in returning home.

"I am a little worried, *mon général,*," I told him, "about the kind of

France I will find when I get home. I fear it will be greatly changed. What we heard from the Germans and from Colonel Gabriel's mission didn't sound much like the France we knew."

"Certainly we never knew a France under the yoke," said Verger, "nor have we ever known Frenchmen who accepted the yoke and worked uncomplainingly, like submissive slaves, for their masters. If I succeed in getting out of here, it is not the Germans alone I shall fight. I shall fight also the spirit which reigns over France today through Frenchmen who have abandoned our traditions.

"I suppose we ought not to be surprised at what has happened. There were so many signs before the war that the republic had bitter enemies, and had them among the men who should have been its protectors. Look at the Army itself, the defensive organism of the republic. How many there were in it, and in high places, who did not understand the ideals on which the republic was built, or, if they understood them, were hostile to them! How could they guard properly what they did not cherish? They did not realize that what they had to protect was the purest expression of the traditions of freedom and humanity which the country has ever possessed."

"I do not know if General de Rensac would agree with you, sir," I said. "He gave me the impression just now that he was disgusted with all the pre-war politicians. I don't know whether he considers that safeguarding the spirit of France means also safeguarding the spirit of democracy."

"What is the spirit of democracy?" Verger asked. "There can be tyranny under a republican form of government, and there can be freedom under a king. Perhaps Rensac and I would not be very much in disagreement on fundamentals, even though he may be less ardent for a republic than I am. To me, also, the greatness of France does not date only from the Revolution. In the days of the kings, as well as in those of the republic, France was always a land where there was an eagerness to press forward towards a more ample future. France has always moved towards greater justice, greater freedom, greater understanding—whether the impulse came from the spirit of the people; or the land and the climate from which it drew its life; or only because it stood in the path of the course of human progress, which seems to have moved from east to west, as though it were

following the sun in its course, in search of brighter light. It was given to France, the most westerly country of the continent of Europe, which added greater freedom to the ideas it had imported from the east, to speed the ideas of her eighteenth century philosophers (dangerous ideas, some thought them) even farther west to a new continent, which first applied them to a political structure. France's spirit of freedom has animated all peoples, as well as her own. And though we have had our share of tyrants and of reactionaries, though there have been Frenchmen, too, who have opposed progress and tried to turn back the tide that would not turn, it is not for them that France is honored throughout the world, but for the others—those who moved forward with the march of progress, and proved that the course of history cannot be reversed.

"Rensac would probably agree with all this, though he would put it in different words—more concrete words, probably, for his philosophy is applied philosophy. France means to him what it means to me and to all of us, but he would rationalize his emotion somewhat differently. His view is more purely nationalistic, of a France in competition with other nations, while I see a France in cooperation with other nations, sharing with them all her conceptions of a better human society. That is the real France. And if you see another France, submissive to foreign ideas, led by men hostile to the spirit of human liberty, claiming to speak in the name of France, do not permit them, Lambert, to persuade you that they really represent the great spirit which for two thousand years has animated our people. They are only transitory, passing phenomena. They have intercepted the stream of destiny, but they have not dammed it. What they say and what they do has no real importance. It will pass, and the real France will resume her moral leadership, as she has always resumed it before, after momentary interruptions. Believe me, my dear Lambert, the body of France lies bleeding, but the soul of France is not dead."

XXXVI

A Letter

THE NIGHT before we were to leave Königstein, the orderlies gave a party for those of us who were going. Our entire snail farm was sacrificed to produce a special feast (we had learned by experience how to make them somewhat more succulent than at first), and we had succeeded in getting a few bottles of Rhine wine through the canteen. It was a merry function, yet at the same time it was almost with regret that I shook hands with the friends I was about to leave. I felt that it was treachery to go away and leave behind the men with whom I had shared imprisonment for a year.

Early the next morning, we were conducted down to the valley, where a special railroad coach was waiting for us. As the senior Admiral, Beaulieu had a compartment to himself, where he chatted for a while with some of the others, and then, after they had left, sent for me to join him.

I left the compartment which had been turned over to the orderlies and found the Admiral engaged in tearing up papers and throwing the bits out of the window.

"Lambert," he said, "I am getting rid of some sketches which I had made of the dispositions of the fortress, and of the region I could see from the mountain-top, for use in case of escape. Verger and Rensac have similar ones, so I brought mine along, rather than have them discovered in my room. The Germans may search us before we cross the frontier, and we had better not carry anything incriminating. I suggest you turn out your pockets, too, to make sure you have no objectionable papers, and then warn the other orderlies to do the same."

"Oh, I haven't anything objectionable with me," I answered, "but

I'll look just to make sure. I haven't cleaned out my pockets for weeks."

"That's a failing of mine also," said Beaulieu, "and I know it's one of yours. If you think you're likely to find anything embarrassing, I'll look the other way."

I laughed, and began going through the contents of my pockets—some souvenir postcards of Königstein, left over at the canteen since the days of tourist trade, a few letters I had received from home, and other odds and ends—and then I came to a long, white envelope, which I didn't recall ever having seen before. It was cleaner than most of the other items in my pocket, from which I judged that I hadn't been carrying it around very long, but for the life of me I couldn't remember what it might be.

"Perhaps a joke of the orderlies," I thought. "One of them may have slipped this into my pocket before I left. Wonder if any one had a sufficiently perverted sense of humor to put in anything that would make trouble with the Germans?"

I slipped out the enclosure. There were several pages in a delicate, clear woman's hand, but one completely unfamiliar to me. I turned to the signature. Then I uttered an exclamation, and handed it to Beaulieu.

"A letter signed Maria Günther!" I said. "I just found it in my pocket. I don't know how it got there, or how long I've been walking around with it."

"What!" cried Beaulieu. "A message from Maria! And you're sure you didn't put it there yourself?"

"Of course," I said. "I've never seen it before. Some one must have slipped it into my pocket—but I can't imagine how or when."

"Think hard!" Beaulieu exhorted me. "There *must* be some simple explanation."

I racked my brain for an explanation. But none came. Then suddenly—

"No!" I said aloud.

"No what?" asked the Admiral.

"Nothing," I said, "it can't be."

"Tell me anyway," said the Admiral. "You may be wrong. Two heads are better than one."

"I thought of Helmuth," I said, "but it couldn't have been he."

"In the first place," said the Admiral, "how could it have been? And in the second, why couldn't it have been?"

"It could have been," I said, "because Helmuth told me recently that he had seen Maria in Dresden. But it couldn't have been because I got out of him indirectly, without betraying myself, of course, that she hadn't sent any message by him."

"That is the first logical sentence you have uttered for several minutes," said the Admiral. "I'm inclined to think it must have been Helmuth. Perhaps he was just covering up his errand to protect himself."

I shook my head decidedly.

"He's not subtle enough for that," I said. "Besides, he never had a chance to slip the letter into my pocket. He was sitting on one bed and I was sitting on the other. He couldn't have done it unless he was a magician. And Helmuth is no magician. He's clumsy and he's stupid. And he was too much interested in trying to establish my interest in Maria Günther ever to have kept it to himself if he had had a message for me. I'm sure it's not Helmuth."

"We'll worry about that later," Beaulieu returned. "That's not so important at the moment. Let's find out first what the letter says."

It was a long letter. I started to read it aloud to the Admiral. Maria began by saying that she was glad she had found a way of communicating with me, and told me that I might answer by the same route, in which I could have complete confidence.

"Not very helpful," I said, "since I don't know how I got the letter. It looks as though it is important to know that, after all."

"It must be," the Admiral said, "that she expected you to get it in some open fashion, so that there wouldn't be any mystery about where it came from. For some reason the original method didn't work, and so somehow or other it was placed in your pocket. Go ahead. What's next?"

Maria continued that she had seen Captain de Pecquot in Dresden. (There was still no explanation of how he had gotten there, or in what guise.) Together, they had worked out a plan which they wanted to put before us. She reminded me of her original suggestion about having the generals taken to the Dresden military hospital,

and of my objection on the grounds of danger. (She didn't go into details here, evidently so that in case the letter should be intercepted, there would be no more victims among those who knew too much about the Gestapo's activities.) At Pecquot's suggestion, she said, she had applied for a place as a voluntary nurse at the hospital, which it was easy for her to get because she held a Swiss Red Cross diploma and because she was the wife of General Günther. She had busied herself with learning all the routine of the hospital, and the opinions and degrees of daring or gullibility of various members of its personnel. She thought she could guarantee now that if the generals could be moved to the hospital, she would be able to slip them out, after which Pecquot would charge himself with getting them out of Germany.

"Lambert," said Beaulieu, when I had finished, "if you ever let papers accumulate in your pockets again, I'll have you court-martialed, I swear I will."

"It's my fault, Admiral," I said crestfallen, "but who would have imagined—"

"Of all the luck!" the Admiral burst out violently. "A workable plan, the first feasible one we've had! Actually inside the fortress and we've carried it out again! If you'd only looked in your pockets before we left! Even this morning! Even a few hours ago! Now we're outside, with the plan, and they're inside, completely ignorant of it! And Maria, thinking we know about it, is waiting and probably wondering why she doesn't hear from us! It's maddening!"

"But it can still be done, sir," I said. "As long as Maria stays in the hospital, it should still work."

"I know, I know," said the Admiral, "but we're losing precious time. The situation may not remain the same forever. Now we'll have to get word to Maria that her message miscarried; and we'll have to find some way of getting another letter into Königstein—this is entirely too long to handle by our code. . . . Oh, well, no use crying about spilt milk."

"I wish I knew how long I've had that letter," I said, "but I have no idea when I got it. The more I think of it, the surer I am that Helmuth didn't bring it. Would Maria dare give her husband's

orderly a letter so full of incriminating details, especially with the mention of Captain de Pecquot, which makes it obvious that he's an old friend of hers? I don't think she would have trusted Helmuth for a minute—particularly if he had offered to carry a message to me. She would have suspected at once, after her husband's jealous scenes, that it was a trick to find out if there were really something between us."

"What you say makes sense," said the Admiral. "But if not Helmuth, who was it?"

"It couldn't have been put into my pocket while I was asleep," I said. "The casemate is locked at night—and it couldn't be one of the other orderlies. One of the soldiers? I don't think so. I haven't been close enough to any of them. The canteen keeper? I don't think that could be it either. The dentist? But in that case, why should the message about teeth have been for you instead of for me?"

"About the only one left is General Günther himself," the Admiral said drily, "and I don't think he did it. You might as well give up. The explanation, if we ever get it, will probably be extremely simple, and we'll wonder why we didn't think of it—like the explanations of magic tricks, which seem baffling when you don't know how they're done, but simple when you do. . . . First, we've got to get rid of this letter. I suggest we both read it several times, to memorize it, in case it is easier for us to send the information it contains to Königstein than for Maria."

We followed the suggestion. Then the Admiral tore the letter up into small pieces, and for greater safety, burned the scraps in the compartment's ash-tray.

To our surprise, there was little formality at the border. We were not searched, but we were asked to show any papers or letters which we might be carrying, and a German sergeant glanced rapidly through them. It would have been easy to hide others, if we had wanted to do so, but, not expecting such an opportunity, none of us, so far as I know, had any papers we couldn't show. My guess was that instructions had been given to treat us as politely as possible, so that we would leave Germany with kinder feelings, just as Günther had tried to implant ideas friendly to the Reich in us; either

that, or German appreciation of Darlan's attitude was so great that we were shown special courtesy.

But if there had been any likelihood that I would have responded favorably to the comparative absence of red tape about our passing of the frontier, it would have been banished by the action of another servant of the German state whose instructions had not been inspired by any desire that we should leave Germany with a good impression.

The man who sent me out of Germany with an added cause for irritation at the Germans was the petty officer who checked our identity papers. They were voluminous and minutely kept. With their mania for recording everything, the Germans had entered almost every detail of our stay at Königstein on our various papers.

Thus as we passed before the officer who was checking our identity against his list, and I gave my name, the officer said, "Ah, yes, Lambert." He picked up my papers, and said: "I see here that you were provided with a pair of shoes by the German Army. Have you a receipt showing that you surrendered them before leaving Königstein?"

"Of course not," I said, "I am wearing them."

"Then you must take them off. They are the property of the German Army. You are not permitted to take them into France."

"But they're the only shoes I have," I protested.

"I'm sorry. That does not concern me. The regulations say that no German official property can cross the border. I will give you a receipt for them."

"I can't wear a receipt," I said. "You don't understand. My own shoes were completely worn out, and I was given these to replace them."

"That has nothing to do with me," the officer said. "My orders are that no German official property may pass the border. Your papers show that you have a pair of shoes which are German official property. You must take them off."

So I returned to my native land in my stocking feet.

"I'm sorry, Lambert," said the Admiral, "that I haven't a spare pair of shoes to offer you. Isn't that typically Teutonic? One organization takes all the pains it can to convert us, and then another stupidly takes a petty action sure to undo all the work of the first!"

XXXVII

Returning Prisoners

THE FORMALITIES finished, our train pulled out of the German frontier station and chugged a few yards, only to stop again immediately at a second station on the French side of the border. I was standing in the corridor looking out of the window, when, down the platform, I saw a back that looked familiar. A man in a French uniform was walking along the train peering into each compartment window as though hunting for some one. I hadn't expected to meet this particular person quite so soon, and I feared that I might have mistaken his identity from the rear; but to find out, I threw open the window, put my head out, and called loudly:

"Captain de Pecquot!"

The uniformed man wheeled quickly. I was right!

Pecquot hurried over to the window where I was standing.

"Lambert! It's good to see you again! Welcome back to France. Where's the Admiral?"

"Two compartments down," I said. "I'll call him."

"Get your baggage off," Pecquot said, "that is, if you have any. I have a car here. I'll take you the rest of the way."

We got off the train, and I started across the platform, picking my way carefully in my stocking feet.

"What the devil?" Pecquot exclaimed, looking at my shoeless feet. I explained, and he grinned.

"Thorough blighters, aren't they?" he commented, and then said, more seriously: "That's no joke, though. It's not too easy to get a pair of shoes nowadays. It takes a special permit. However, I can fix that for you."

"Just get me to Paris," I said, "and I'll be all right. I've got plenty of shoes in my place there."

"Maybe you have and maybe you haven't," Pecquot answered. "They're thorough there, too."

"How do you happen to be in uniform, *mon cher Jacques*?" the Admiral asked. "I had an idea that you were doing—er—specifically non-uniformed work. Ah! An official car, too!"

"It's an official car or nothing these days, Admiral," Pecquot explained. "There's no gasoline for private citizens. I've returned to active duty. My friend, Colonel Gabriel, who visited you at Königstein, managed to get me assigned to his department—he has charge of all matters pertaining to French prisoners of war for the Vichy government. I thought it might be useful to our plans, you understand—but I'll explain that to you in detail later. For the moment, I have been assigned to meet you and bring you to Vichy. The assignment, as I perhaps don't need to explain, was my own idea."

We got into the car. Pecquot had brought no chauffeur, in order to be able to talk freely. It was decided that I couldn't drive very well, in my stocking feet, so Pecquot took the wheel, and he and the Admiral sat in front, while I rode in the back seat.

"You didn't have an opportunity to meet Maria Günther, Admiral?" Pecquot said, after a short pause.

"No," Beaulieu said. "Lambert talked with her. His report on her is most flattering. He also says she obviously thinks very highly of you."

"And I think very highly of her," Pecquot said. "She's a remarkable woman. When I first met her I didn't really appreciate her, though she must have cast some sort of spell over me, even then, to make me follow her all the way to Königstein. I have a fatalistic feeling about the staggering coincidence of being associated with her again, years after I had taken it for granted that I had seen her for the last time. It's as if some higher power had singled her out, and said to me, by bringing her back into my life once more: 'This is the woman who was meant for you. You can't escape her.' Well, Admiral, I don't want to escape her. In fact, if I can help it, she isn't going to escape me. Not again. Husband or no husband, Maria Günther, sooner or later, is going to be my wife."

"I wish you luck," said the Admiral. "After all, I have no reason for wishing Günther any."

"Let's forget about him," said Pecquot. "He never deserved a woman like Maria anyway. He couldn't possibly understand her. She's far too subtle for him. To tell you the truth, she's too subtle for me sometimes. I don't always understand her completely myself. I know one thing, though. She can be trusted implicitly. She is working away at her plan to get your friends out with all her soul . . . I saw her in Dresden, you know. You did hear that, didn't you?"

"Yes," said the Admiral. "What we couldn't figure out was how you managed to get to Dresden."

"Not in this uniform," Pecquot laughed. "I had a Bulgarian passport, which made me a citizen of a friendly nation, and I speak very good German for a Bulgarian—the merest touch of that Sofia accent, perhaps. . . . Maria sent you word of her preparations just as I had to leave. I suppose Rensac and Verger are planning to try to get out to the hospital?"

"I'm afraid not," said Beaulieu ruefully. "Lambert only found Maria's letter today on the train." And he explained what had happened.

"That's a damned shame!" Pecquot said. "Maria was getting things well lined up, too. I was surprised at her cleverness. She's naturally rather reserved, but when she sets to work to draw people out, she's good at it. She was in the confidence of many of the hospital people already, both the Nazis and the anti-Nazis, and by now I imagine she has every one catalogued. . . . Perhaps it's not so bad, after all, that there was some delay. It may give her more time to get ready, and make sure there'll be no slips. But I don't know how long it will take to notify her that her message didn't get through, and then she'll have to figure out some means of repeating her instructions to your two friends. Apparently she can do that, since she got that letter into Lambert's pocket. I don't know how that was done, though. She didn't tell me how she was getting her letter through."

"I'm afraid we can't throw any light on that either," Beaulieu said. "We tried to figure it out, but we couldn't. But tell me—why did you go back into service?"

"Not because I intended to give up underground work," Pecquot answered. "On the contrary. I returned to the Army precisely because, in this particular bureau, it gives me excellent opportunities to

advance our purposes. I'm at a good observation point, where I learn everything that is happening in regard to French prisoners in Germany; and as I am charged very often with meeting trains of repatriated prisoners, those the Germans send back because they are too sick to be of any use to us any more, I get an opportunity to gather information which is extremely valuable to us."

"I think in this case you can tell us more than we can tell you," the Admiral remarked. "You see, we've been almost entirely cut off from the world, and we have only very imperfect ideas of what has been happening since we were imprisoned. Tell me, how do you operate?"

As we drove along, Pecquot sketched for us a picture of the resistance movement. I couldn't help thinking of the groups of collaborationist and non-collaborationist generals at Königstein when he described France as split between two factions—those who had accepted the Germans, and those who were resisting them. But there was one difference; and that was that in France the resisters were by far the more numerous, and increasing in numbers every day.

"The groups of resistance," Pecquot said, "have grown spontaneously, outstripping the plans of their organizers. Every new fighter brings in others, and great organisms have built themselves up almost without direction, like a crystal, formed by successive deposits. A fierce enthusiasm animates all their members. They are determined that whatever the government tells them, they are not going to submit to the yoke of the invader."

By day, the members of the underground went about their normal occupations, Pecquot told us; by night they printed and distributed their underground journals, spirited recruits for General de Gaulle's forces out of the country, sabotaged German troop trains, held meetings for workers forced to labor in the war industry factories, to give them instructions on how to spoil their product without being detected.

Pecquot's assignment to meet the prisoners' trains permitted him to talk individually with hundreds of Frenchmen. The great majority of them were privates or non-commissioned officers, plus a very few of commissioned rank, sent back for reasons of health; and among these men, Pecquot found many whom he considered

good material for the underground. He couldn't speak to them about it himself, of course; but under pretext of his official activity, he took down their names and addresses, and later, after further investigation, those who had passed his scrutiny were invited to join the groups of secret resistance.

"But don't you find men you distrust among the repatriates?" I asked. "Surely, the Germans let some of them go for good reasons of their own."

"Of course I do," Pecquot answered. "There are, for instance, those supposedly released for bad health—but who show no signs of it. We get both officers and enlisted men in that category. Apparent health isn't conclusive, but our suspicions are aroused when these men answer our questions cautiously, or in talking about their experiences either fail to express the resentment so common among ex-prisoners, or else do so too violently, as though they were trying to mask their real feelings. I still don't form any final opinion, but I put them down for special observation, as suspect of having been released to be of service to the Germans. Then it's up to my friends to check up on them, and discover whether their activities are those of loyal Frenchmen—or traitors.

"I don't know how good my intuition has been so far, because I haven't been doing this job long enough to check my own suspicions against the final investigations. Another man was handling it, but he was assigned to a different post, and I got Gabriel to let me take over. My predecessor warned me I would find very often that at first the original guess concerning suspected persons would seem to be wrong, but that eventually some of them would show by their activities that they were serving German masters. Their motives vary. Sometimes it seems to be simply self-interest. At other times, it is discovered that the Germans have some hold over their ex-captives—because they have taken members of their families as hostages, for instance. But whatever their motives, they do not remain long in France before we find out what they are doing. They are all marked men."

"What happened to your predecessor?" asked Beaulieu.

"He isn't lost to us," said Pecquot. "We're still using him. We have

men everywhere inside the services of Vichy. For instance—do you know how our underground papers get much of their news? From the government censorship bureau—but the government doesn't know it. All suppressed news is filed separately in the government offices—and workers of ours in those offices just lift the censored files out of the official archives, bring them over to our printing shops, and we let out the news."

"But just who are you fighting?" Beaulieu asked. "You must excuse me if I find it a little difficult to adjust myself to these new conditions. I thought your activities were directed against the Germans, but it sounds to me as though you were working just as much against Frenchmen."

"We are," said Pecquot. "In fact, I should say we are working more against Frenchmen, directly, than against the Germans. Indirectly, it amounts to the same thing. The Germans have to work through the collaborationists. They can't run France alone. We impede the collaborationists. If we could end their services altogether, the Germans would be practically helpless to make any use of France. We don't manage to do that, but we do succeed in rendering much of their work ineffective—and we do frighten off some of the weak and timid from giving services to the enemy that they might otherwise provide. The Germans seek to make Frenchmen serve them through fear; we try to make them more afraid of the consequences of aiding the invader."

"Our numbers are increasing every day as the nature of the collaborationists becomes clearer to every one. At first, there was perhaps a majority feeling in the country that the Vichy government was helping the Germans only insofar as it could not do otherwise, that its main object was to provide minimum aid in order to prevent the Germans from taking everything over themselves; but very few persons believe that any more. They see that the collaborationists are working for themselves, that they wish to derive personal profit, in terms of money, or prestige, or power, from the disaster which has overtaken their country. And what is worse, we are beginning to discover that some of the men who took over the reins as a result of France's defeat were so greedy for power that they contributed

to the defeat in order that they might rise over the prostrate body of France. We know today who they are. I would not like to be in their skins when France becomes free again."

"I can believe," said Beaulieu, "that some Frenchmen may have been selfish enough to have derived personal profit from the defeat of France; but I can't believe that any of them could have engineered the defeat purposely, to that end."

"I can show you the proofs," Pecquot said. "But you must not believe that it was simply for personal profit that the republic was betrayed. The men who stabbed France in the back did not look upon themselves as traitors. They thought they were patriots. They were convinced that the republic was an unworthy garb for France. They had as their ideal a France ruled, like Germany, with an iron hand—their iron hand. To them, the German victory was only a means to rebuild this stronger France. Their plans went astray. But they still do not blame themselves for taking the responsibility of using a foreign army to insure their own rise to power; they blame the people for failing to support them in raising their new régime under the protection of the foreign army."

"Then the people are still sound?" Beaulieu asked.

"The people are admirable. The French peasant, the French worker, the *petite bourgeoisie*—I can't say the same, alas, for the *haute bourgeoisie*, which is tainted with collaborationism—are resisting every pressure, in spite of the multiplication of secret police forces and of arbitrary arrests, to accept the régime that the Vichy government is trying to force upon them. And one of these days, I am confident, the little people of France, the great little people of France, will win back the victory which their leaders threw away."

XXXVIII

New Plans

IN ACCORDANCE with the order Pecquot had brought to him, Admiral Beaulieu had to report first to Vichy, and thereafter to Toulon. Pecquot advised him to show no hostility towards collaborationism in Vichy, pointing out that he could be much more useful in the future if he remained in the confidence of the administration, than if he were set down as a confirmed anti-Vichyite.

At Toulon, Beaulieu had me restored to my former rank of chief petty officer and my old assignment as his secretary. He then arranged a two months' furlough for us, and we left for Marseilles, where Mme. Beaulieu, whom the Admiral had not yet seen, was waiting for him. I would have liked to have returned to Paris to see my own family, but crossing the demarcation line was too difficult, so I went to Marseilles with the Admiral.

Mme. Beaulieu was found sharing an apartment with Mme. Verger. Beaulieu gave the general's wife what news he could of her husband, while I told her maid, Gaston's wife, how he was getting along. And then the Admiral asked for news about Tellier, first telling Mme. Verger the story of the photograph.

"What a miserable trick!" she cried. "You know, I don't think Tellier knew about that. I haven't too much respect for him, but I can't believe he would stoop to tactics of that kind. Probably the Germans followed us around and took their pictures without his knowledge as well as without mine."

"What was Tellier's attitude when he returned?" Beaulieu asked.

"Rather suspicious, I thought," Mme. Verger answered promptly. "I assumed at once that he was doing an errand for the Germans. That was why I didn't discourage him. I had noticed long ago that

he had an eye for me, and it didn't surprise me in the least that he began to pay attention to me again. He doesn't attract me, but I wanted to hear more of what he had to say, so I went around with him quite a lot."

"But what was it exactly that made you suspicious of him?" Beaulieu insisted.

"Two things," said Mme. Verger. "First, when I began to question him about my husband, I realized very quickly that he apparently hadn't been in very close touch with him recently, and the only way I could explain that, with the two of them confined to such a small area, was that they were on the outs. And the fact that he had no direct message from my husband made me pretty sure of that. So I wondered how he had found me—I was sure that if the General had given him this address he would have sent a message, too—and the only thing I could figure out was that he had gotten it from the Germans. The reason I thought of that was because of the second suspicious indication.

"That was the way he pressed upon me that my husband was being very foolish in maintaining hostility to the Germans. He told me that he was hurting himself, that he was in their bad graces, and that there was little likelihood of his ever being released if he persisted in his attitude. He advised me to write to him explaining that France had accepted collaboration, that it was now generally realized that Germany was actually France's best friend, that her seeming defeat in the end would prove to have been a victory for her, and to urge him to change his own viewpoint. I've heard enough of that sort of talk around here to know where it originates; and I've also seen enough examples of how the Germans like to use important persons to promote their ideas, to understand that Tellier was working for them, and would like to get my husband into their camp, too. I didn't have any intention of advising him to do anything of the kind, of course. If I did, I knew he wouldn't have taken my advice anyway. But I thought I'd keep Tellier on the string, just to find out anything interesting he might happen to know."

"I don't suppose you actually did learn anything from him, though," the Admiral said. "I don't imagine he knows anything in particular."

"That's where you're wrong," Mme. Verger said. "He did know something, and I got it out of him. I think he really got quite hopeful that he was cutting my husband out of my affections. In any case, he began to hint at how much better off I would be with him than with the General. In fact, he seemed to lose interest in converting him to collaborationism, to be quite placidly resigned to what he described as my husband's obstinacy, and the fact that it meant his career was finished. 'What a shame, my dear,' he said to me, 'that you, a young woman still, elegant, intelligent, loving nice things, should be tied down to a man who—I'm sorry I have to say it—is finished. After all, you know, you have to be alive to what is happening about you. Now your husband's life is virtually over. Even if they let him out—and that doesn't seem very likely—he will have to retire, of course. There's no place for him in the present régime, or for that matter in any future régime, for the Germans are the masters of Europe, and they won't tolerate your husband's return to active service. No, there's nothing for it but a humdrum life in some God-forsaken provincial town, on retirement pay—if he even gets that—far away from that brilliant society you grace so beautifully.'

"On the other hand, Tellier described himself as being able to look forward to the future as 'the coming man.' His wife, he said, could expect a brilliant lot. He all but suggested that I should divorce my husband and marry him. He was rather vague at first about what exactly was promised him, but I egged him on, and he finally told me—Pétain had promised him command in Tunisia. 'And then,' he said, 'you can imagine what services I will be able to render and what sort of reward I can expect.'

"I pretended to be stupid, and said, 'Tunisia! That sounds like a dreary place! I'm sure I don't see what you could do there that would be worth anything to anybody.'

"So then he set to work to explain. 'But, my dear,' he said, 'don't you realize what is bound to happen? Tunisia is the most important strategic position in Africa, located at the Sicilian Narrows, where the crossing is easiest. Now eventually, of course, the Germans have got to go into North Africa—no two ways about it. It's simply historical destiny. There's nothing we can do to prevent it, and it would be very foolish of us to try. But we have some people in North Africa

who aren't intelligent enough to see what is going to be, and who would lose everything for us by attempting to prevent the inevitable. Now if we should oppose the entry of the Germans into Tunisia, we would only arouse their anger, and lose our own place in the New Order—which is going to be a very handsome place, I assure you.

“So the point is that instead of retarding events by a foolish resistance, what we must do is to help them along. If France is to play an important rôle in post-war Europe, she must take a positive part in the war. We're neutral again, for the moment, of course; but we must shift back before the end or we won't have earned the right to a prominent rôle in the New Europe. That means we must get back into the war. Now our chance to get back in is when the Germans go into North Africa. That will give them command of the Mediterranean, break the lifelines of the British Empire in two, and shorten the war. The British will resist, of course. Now if the Frenchmen in command in Tunisia should fight on the British side against the Germans, we would be beaten again, and at the end of the war, France will be on the losing side, and Germany will owe her nothing. But if we fight with the Germans against the British, we will be on the winning side, and we will be able to collect for our services. Suppose we took over Egypt and Suez, for instance—wouldn't that be winning something for France?

“That's my job. I'll be sent to take command in Tunisia, I'll get to work to reassign officers to make sure that things will go smoothly, I'll get rid of the trouble-makers—well, I'd better not say anything more, but you see that I will be in a position to command a great deal of gratitude, and my future will be assured. There's practically no limit to the heights I may reach. The Marshal is an old man, you know—he can't last much longer.”

“I thought he was a monster of ambition. But I pretended to admire him, and the first chance I got, I passed on what he had told me to Captain de Pecquot. I understand he reported it to the British.”

There had been no news from Maria since our return, and Pecquot began to be worried. Finally he obtained a short leave and left for Switzerland, with the intention of trying to get information from the

grapevine operating across the Swiss-German border, and if necessary to go to Dresden again to see her.

He also wanted to get word to Maria that her instructions concerning her escape plan had not arrived. We knew that no further news from her had reached the two generals, for Mme. Verger had received a coded letter from her husband in which he spoke of their expectation of getting some word from Maria at the next moving picture performance—so we knew that they had heard nothing else.

Pecquot returned in a few days, in a downcast mood.

"Something's wrong," he said. "Maria isn't at the hospital any more. It seems she has gone back to Königstein. I can't understand it. It didn't fit in with her plans, unless she's changed them; and she told me herself that her husband had insisted on her leaving the castle, because he was jealous of her."

Beaulieu grinned.

"I can explain it, I think," he said. "To be more specific, Günther was jealous of Lambert here. Lambert has gone, so he called Maria back. That's probably the answer."

Pecquot looked bewildered.

"Jealous of Lambert?" he asked. "Why, for goodness sake?"

We told him the story of Günther's suspicions, at which Pecquot laughed heartily—a little too heartily, I thought. He apparently didn't consider me as a possible rival. Günther at least had been more flattering.

"Come to think of it," he said, sobering suddenly, "it's probably just as well Lambert didn't find that letter of Maria's in time. Our two generals might have gone to the Dresden hospital after Maria left—and the Gestapo might have taken care of the rest. Perhaps that was lucky."

"Um," said Beaulieu, "but we seem to be unlucky about our escape plans. There's another one gone glimmering. We're right back where we were at the beginning."

"Not quite," said Pecquot. "Maria's inside again now. She may be more useful there than in the hospital. . . . I'm leaving for Vichy tomorrow—I have to report back to Colonel Gabriel for the end of my leave—but I'll see you in a few days, and perhaps I'll have something interesting to tell you."

"Is that just a hope," Beaulieu asked, "or have you something definite in mind?"

"It's something definite," Pecquot said, "but I don't want to talk about it yet. Talking about projects too soon spoils them—that's a private superstition of mine. Just be patient for a day or two, and then, I think, we may be able to get some action."

XXXIX

Growing A Moustache

I ENJOYED myself thoroughly during Pecquot's absence, idling in Marseilles—and few cities are more admirably adapted to the purpose. On a hot summer day, no one in Marseilles has any energy; nor does any one in Marseilles expect any energy from any one else. I had a few friends there. I looked some of them up, and I discovered that even the carefree people of Marseilles were now concerned with the political events going on in the world about them. In the big cafés of the Canebière or the little restaurants of the Vieux Port, everywhere the citizens of Marseilles were engaged in vehement discussion about what could be done to end the present situation. The talk was still good-natured, jocular and lively; but behind it there was a determination which seemed a new note in this ordinarily easy-going town.

One day I ran across an old friend from Paris in a Marseilles café. He had not been in the Army, having been rejected for military service for physical reasons. But now that the war was presumably over, he had begun to fight it. He confided in me that he was in the underground, directing sabotage activities. He had crossed the demarcation line into German-occupied territory secretly more than thirty times.

"It's a dark future France has before her, Pierre," I said to him.

"Not at all, Lambert, not at all," he said. "I know what you mean—but you are wrong. Our future instead is exceptionally bright. Do you remember the feeling of pre-war France? It was one of confusion. Many whose hearts were in the right place didn't realize where they should have stood politically. Objectives were embroiled. Those were the dark days, the days of misunderstanding and disunity and doubt; and they led us to disaster.

"But the disaster has happened now, and it is over with. So is the confusion which caused the disaster. We see things clearly now, and since we do understand, the results of that understanding must mean improvement for us. The defeat was a catalyst. It has separated the good from the bad. All the evil that was in us has been precipitated into a little heap of refuse, the government of Vichy and its servants; and all the rest of us realize that that is the evil, and that we must dispose of it. We are united now, we know what we have to do, and we have a leader to direct us in doing it."

"A leader?" I asked. "Who?"

"It's easy to see that you have been shut up for a year," Pierre answered. "Who but de Gaulle? All of us in the underground swear by him. It is part of our new clarity. We see now that our first duty was to fight the enemy. Some Frenchmen did not see that, and they either helped the enemy to come in or submitted to him afterwards. De Gaulle is our leader because he never ceased fighting, not for a minute. He represents the real continuity of French effort, not the government which is continuous with what went before only through legal fictions."

"We heard of de Gaulle in Königstein," I said, "but it was hard to get a clear picture of him. What kind of man is he?"

"If you mean personally," said Pierre, "I don't know, and I don't care. As an individual, whose hair may be dark or light, who may eat a heavy breakfast or none, who may be a pleasant companion or even an uncomfortable one, I know nothing about him. All I know is what he stands for. His principles are sound, and that is what counts, not whether he is a fallible human being or a genius. He personifies the spirit of resistance, the intransigent refusal to yield, which France has now found again, and which, if she had found it sooner, would have saved her her present miseries. He personifies also the maintenance of the French tradition of political liberty, of democracy. They tell me that he was once a Royalist. I don't know whether that is true or not, but today he stands for the continued defense of the French Republic, and for the principle that there shall be no changes in the French regime except such as are freely consented to by Frenchmen. Don't make the mistake of looking upon the de Gaullist movement as a personal following. It is not. It is

much more than that. It is the movement in which are concentrated all the French forces of resistance, all the energies of those who have not yielded to the enemy. De Gaulle himself would be powerless to change the meaning of his movement, even if it were likely that he would want to do so. For all 'Gaullism' means is the continued resistance of the French people to the enemy; and if de Gaulle himself could be brought to end his resistance, then the movement would continue under another leader. But he will not change. The man who remained firm when everything seemed lost will not waver now that we are fighting again, feebly and with difficulty, it is true, but still strongly enough so that our efforts are felt. And we are growing stronger every day."

Mme. Verger got a letter from her husband. They had learned now that Maria was back in Königstein. They had received certain messages through our window-curtain code, but they seemed somewhat puzzled concerning their interpretation. This was easy enough to understand, for no doubt Maria had referred to her letter to them, which of course they had never received. Probably she had tried to warn them to cancel the execution of this plan, but as they had never heard of it, her warning must have been unintelligible to them.

Verger also managed to indicate, in more or less veiled language, in a section of his letter in which he used no code, that the pressure on the non-collaborationist generals to accept cooperation with Germany had increased since we had been freed.

"I can imagine the kind of arguments they are using," Beaulieu said. "They are probably saying, 'You see, your friends, the naval officers, have been freed because the Navy has realized the value of collaboration. Only the few uncompromising men among your number are preventing you from seeing your country and your families again.' That ought to increase the bad feeling between the collaborationists and our friends."

When Pecquot returned from Vichy, he was overflowing with optimism and energy.

"Lambert," he said to me, "you are positively psychic!"

"Why so?" I asked.

"Because you have started to grow a moustache. I was about to make that very suggestion to you. It also looks, fortunately, as though it might eventually amount to something. It happens that I have a job for you, and it is one for which a moustache will be useful."

"Plainclothesman, perhaps?" I asked jokingly, remembering the invariable walrus moustaches of the detectives in French newspaper cartoons.

"No, no, nothing like that," Pecquot smiled mysteriously. "Perhaps I should have said an assignment rather than a job. How would you like to take a little trip with me?"

"That depends on the Admiral," I said.

"Oh, the Admiral will let you off all right for what I have in mind," Pecquot said.

"Something to do with our plans?"

"How quick you are," Pecquot said teasingly. "Now don't ask me any questions. You'll find out soon enough what it's all about. Meanwhile, just encourage that moustache as much as you can."

"But, Captain," I said, "you can't expect me not to be curious. What in the world could my moustache have to do with this mysterious trip? Can't you give me a hint?"

"Well, use your wits a little. Why would it make a difference whether you had a moustache or not?"

I thought that over for a few minutes. Finally, I said: "I can't think of anything I might be able to do that I couldn't do just as well without a moustache as with one. The only sense there would be in my growing a moustache would be if I wanted to disguise myself."

"There you are!" cried Pecquot. "You have the answer, and you don't even know it. That's just what I want you to do—disguise yourself. You've got to look different, my poor friend!"

"But why?" I said. "No one anywhere knows what I look like anyway. I'm not an important personage. Even if you want me to slip across the demarcation line and go back to Paris, what would it matter? The only people who would know me are my family and friends—and they'd know me with a moustache too. Where could I go where I'd need a disguise?"

"What would you say," said Pecquot slowly, "to a little trip to—Königstein?"

"Königstein!" I gasped. "But how? How will you manage it?"

"I suppose I might as well tell you all about it," Pecquot said resignedly. "I don't believe in talking too much about plans in advance, though. Bad luck. I'm always afraid something will thwart them. I don't like to start counting on anything before it's completely in the bag. And this isn't—yet."

But he told me his scheme. It seemed that the Vichy propaganda services had lately made a moving picture on the French youth camps, where young French lads were being taught the same sort of ideology that had already been imposed upon German youth. It was, from beginning to end, a propaganda preachment for totalitarianism and French collaborationism with Germany. Marshal Pétain had been delighted with it, and, at his own request, had viewed it five times.

Now some one had put before him the idea that the resistance to collaborationist ideas among the imprisoned Army officers might be reduced if they could see this film. Another mission to visit officers' prison camps in Germany was shortly to set out, under the direction of Colonel Gabriel's department, with Königstein as its first objective, since the highest ranking officers were there.

"I have secured for myself," Pecquot said, "a job which I don't appreciate at all—but it will give me a rôle which will free me of all suspicion. I am to present the film, commenting on the ideas it presents, and urging on the officers who see it the advantages of collaboration and the wisdom of the Marshal's policy. Personally, I consider the picture a disgusting exhibition; and my real hope is that these scenes of French lads aping the Nazis will disgust our officers so much that anything I may say will have its effect counteracted by the picture. But as the protagonist of collaborationist propaganda, I will be in a perfect position to operate unsuspected. No one will believe for a moment that I work with the underground. So I am going to Königstein with this mission, and I am going to take you, Lambert, along with me. I was able to explain to Gabriel that it would be very useful for me, in order to accomplish my propaganda mission at Königstein, to have a secretary who knew the sentiments of the various officers there, and he has already secured a Navy release for you for the time necessary for the trip. Of course, I

want you, with your knowledge of Königstein, along for quite other reasons."

"Now I see the reason for the moustache," I said. "You don't want me to be recognized there. But considering the length of time I spent with the other prisoners, I'm sure a moustache won't be sufficient disguise."

"I don't expect you to see them at all," Pecquot said. "I'm not going to take you up to the Schloss. Perhaps I won't even get up there myself. It's just an extra precaution in case any of the soldiers from the fortress, who have seen you there, should run into us in the village. I don't want to start them thinking about why you might have returned."

"In that case," I said, "I don't think there'll be much danger. No one in the village would recognize me, of course, for we were never allowed there. And I don't think the soldiers are permitted to spend free time in the village either."

"Keep the moustache growing anyway," said Pecquot. "It certainly won't do any harm, and if you do turn out to need a disguise, you won't be able to grow one on the spot."

"But after we get to Königstein," I said, "what do we do then?"

"Now, I've told you enough," Pecquot answered, "and I'm not going to say any more. Perhaps we won't do anything. Perhaps we'll just make our visit and come back home again. Things may not work out as I hope. I can't tell till I get there. There's many a slip twixt the cup and the lip, you know."

"I'm sure you've got it all worked out," I said. "Don't tell me you're leaving anything to chance."

"I won't tell you that," Pecquot said, "or anything else. I'm not saying a word. Just sit on that curiosity of yours from now on. It's had all the satisfaction from me it's going to get."

XL

An Abscess

ADMIRAL BEAULIEU decided to accompany Pecquot and myself to Vichy. He still had some of his leave left, and he wanted to look over the situation in the new French capital, sound out some of his former friends and acquaintances, and decide what attitude to take. The three of us shared a compartment, although it wasn't strictly according to regulations for a non-commissioned officer to travel in the same compartment with high-ranking superiors. The fact that I served Beaulieu as secretary was what permitted the exception in my case.

The trip was boring, and after a little while I decided to stroll through the train to see whether any one I knew was aboard. Most of the compartments, I saw as I walked through the corridor, were filled with Army and Navy officers, who seemed to be the chief travellers to Vichy. An Army captain came towards me along the corridor, and I saluted mechanically as I stepped back into a compartment to let him pass. To my surprise, instead of returning my salute, he glared at me vindictively and went by. For an instant, I failed to remember who he was. Then realization came back to me. It was Darceau, who must have recognized me, and still believed that it was I who had betrayed his rank at Königstein!

I turned to hurry after him to explain. He had already passed into the next car, which was our own. I hastily crossed the platform after him. He was not in sight. Disappointed at missing him, I passed through the car, looking into every compartment as I went by—and found him in ours. He was standing just inside the door, his back to me, talking to the Admiral. I didn't want to interrupt, so I stood irresolutely outside in the corridor, very much embarrassed.

I heard a muffled exclamation from Darceau, and then he wheeled around and started to leave the compartment, when his eyes fell on me.

"Lambert!" he cried, "my poor fellow! I have done you a terrible injustice! When I saw you in the corridor, and then ran into the Admiral, I knew you must still be with him, and I started to denounce you. I have believed all this time that you gave me away to the Nazis at Königstein. The Admiral has just explained to me what happened. I'm deeply ashamed that I had suspected you. Can you forgive me?"

"I think any one would have thought the same under the circumstances, *mon capitaine*," I returned. "There is really nothing to forgive. What has been worrying me is that I knew what you must think of me, and there was no way I could let you know the truth."

"I'm deeply sorry," Darceau repeated. "Really very sorry. I should have had more confidence in you. I'm very much embarrassed."

"Oh, forget about it," Beaulieu said. "I assure you, Lambert doesn't hold it against you. I know myself that he was bothered only because he knew you must suspect him—and to tell you the truth, I was worried for a little while myself, though I know him much better than you possibly could. Now sit down and tell us how you got out."

Darceau sat down on one of the banquettes.

"There's not very much to tell," he said. "The Germans took revenge on me for my deception by sending me to a punishment camp in East Prussia. The climate was terrible, and the food was bad—much worse than at Königstein—you remember how bad it was those first few days; I suppose they managed to improve it later."

"They did not," said the Admiral. "The only improvements were those we were able to make by private purchases and packages sent us—and that didn't help much. I don't see how they could have fed you worse without starving you."

"Well, that's what they did," Darceau said. "They gave us starvation rations. It kept us alive, of course, but it affected the health of every one in the place. The treatment we got from our guards and their officers was also extremely rough. Finally I had a really serious physical breakdown. I lost 30 pounds in a few weeks, and the camp doctor decided that I was going to die anyway, and might as well

die in France as on his hands, so he gave me a medical discharge. But I'm fairly tough, and there wasn't anything wrong with me that restored good food wouldn't fix. I was well taken care of here, allowed special rations, and today I feel as fit as ever. But tell me—how did you leave Rensac? Was he still interested in escape?"

"Definitely," Beaulieu said. "In fact, we're working on something now."

Pecquot lifted his eyebrows interrogatively, but Beaulieu said, "That's all right, Jacques. Darceau started to try to get Rensac out before you even heard about it. We can trust him."

"I've had one or two ideas myself," Darceau said, "but none of them came to anything. And then, I haven't been out very long either."

"Do you mind," Pecquot asked, "if I step out into the corridor to have a smoke with Captain Darceau? I'd like to talk with him for a few moments—things I don't want to bore you with. I think perhaps we may be able to cooperate on one or two little matters."

"Of course not," Beaulieu said, "run along." And as the other two disappeared down the corridor, he winked at me, and added, "Pecquot likes his little mystery, doesn't he?"

We found the atmosphere of Vichy most curious. The very air was palpitating with intrigue. Nowhere was there any of the clean breeze which had swept through the rest of France. Here no one was planning how to get the better of the enemy. It was always a question of getting on the right side of the enemy, of earning his favors, and as a rule the fate of the French people was looked upon as only an incidental matter. The country was to be ruled as the private interests of the politicians in power directed. If they could profit by pressing the German yoke more firmly down upon the neck of the average man, then the yoke would be pressed down without compunction. And at the same time that all these unsavory profiteers of misfortune were toadying to the enemy, they were seeking to hamstring one another, to thrust down those who were in favor with the invader, and to gain their places themselves.

Pecquot, who seemed to know the exact status of every one in Vichy, pointed out to us the members of the various groups in the

hierarchy of collaboration. There were, more powerful than all the rest, though often operating from behind the scenes, the members of the economic combine which the underground suspected of having conspired with the enemy even before the defeat. There were the heavy industrialists, the members of the Franco-German Siderurgical Committee, who had operated regardless of nationality during the war, through the war and after the war. Some of them were now members of the cabinet. There was the military caste, riding high by virtue of the leadership of Pétain, among them many of the men who had been besmirched by public suspicion in the pre-war cagouland affair, which had attempted then to fasten the chains of Fascism upon France. There were the financiers—the presidents and vice-presidents and directors of a few big banks which had never dropped their connection with German banking houses, and, on the governmental side, the inspectors of finance who had always maintained their own oligarchical state within a state. There were the politicians, the front men and the lobbyists for the industrialists and the bankers, smaller fry, these, but as a rule the only ones whose operations were glimpsed by the public. Laval was in temporary eclipse, but Peyrouton and Flandin were in positions of power. And everywhere were spies and police, dozens of different new services, each one representing the private creation of some new Minister of the Interior who distrusted the police of his predecessors; and the agents of Germany, from the unknown members of the Gestapo to the officers who, in their German uniforms, lorded it over the French on their own soil; and in the German Consulate-General was Krug von Nydda, real master of the government of Vichy.

"This place is an abscess," Pecquot said, "an abscess where all the pus in the body politic of France has concentrated. The rest of France has been cleansed now; and when we have cut open this malignant pocket and drained it of its rottenness, then France will regain new health. But we must do that for ourselves. We can expect no help from abroad. How can they understand in other countries, in Washington, for instance, what is going on in France today, when their diplomats breathe this tainted atmosphere, and talk only to these corrupt and selfish men, and think that they are viewing France? The underground press printed the other day a defense of the

American State Department for its relations with Vichy. Secretary Hull said that it was valuable to keep American representatives in Vichy because it was an outpost from which events in France could be observed. But what an outpost! An outpost to which the clean people of France are not even admitted, where no one may live who has not satisfied the collaborationists that he is one of them! What can foreigners possibly learn of the real France here—particularly such naïve infants as the Americans send to us? It is like trying to understand a man by talking with him only when he is in delirium! What curious reports they must be sending back about us!”

Pecquot's talk with Darceau on the train had borne fruit. Satisfied that he might profitably work with us, Pecquot had told him his plans (more, I suspected, than he had told me), and had made him one of our little conspiratorial group. He had at first tried to get Darceau attached to the mission, but had been unsuccessful, particularly as he was still on sick leave, recuperating from his prison experiences. So it was then decided that Darceau should use the excuse of his health to secure permission to go to Switzerland to recuperate more quickly. There he was to make contact with Pecquot's friends of the British Intelligence Service and prepare Rensac's and Verger's crossing of the Swiss border if we succeeded in spiriting them out of Königstein.

We were discussing our plans to this end in the garden pavilion of the Cintra Bar in Vichy one day, speaking in a low tone of voice, and saying nothing important whenever a waiter approached. I was wearing civilian clothes, with which Pecquot had provided me, so that I would not appear conspicuous, as a petty officer, in the company of commissioned men.

We had felt at ease in our conversation because the tables about us were not taken. But when a new customer came in, sat down at a table near ours, and became engrossed in the pages of *Figaro*, Pecquot leaned across the table and whispered: “Better change the subject. That's Aramond. Hope he doesn't recognize me. He's not the kind of company I care for these days.”

“You don't mean Philippe Aramond, the financial master-mind?” Beaulieu asked.

"I do," said Pecquot. "You've heard about him, of course. In case you're not up-to-date on his activities, he's one of the most active collaborationists today—one of the key men, if not the key man, in the big money crowd behind the Vichy régime."

"I'd heard something of the sort," said the Admiral, "but I don't know much about him—except that Rensac got a message from him at Königstein which rather puzzled him." And he told Pecquot about the greeting Garbriel had delivered for Aramond.

"There must have been something behind it," Pecquot said. "Aramond never took the trouble to send even good wishes to any one without having some hidden motive for it. Nothing I hear about him surprises me. His ways are dark and devious. Nobody knows exactly how much he had to do with recent political developments; but they do know that he came out on top in them. He moves freely between the occupied and unoccupied zones, or for that matter, between France and North Africa, and he also makes fairly regular visits to Germany. Our information is that he's a ringleader in the present selling out of French economy to the Germans by getting them control of the majority of the stock in all important corporations."

"Careful, Pecquot," Darceau warned. "He seems to have recognized you, all right. He's coming this way."

Aramond had risen from his table and was coming towards ours. His lean figure moved towards us like some nervous undulation. He took Pecquot's hand cordially, fairly exuding charm, as though he were greeting his dearest friend on earth—but what he said took us all aback.

"*Ah, ce cher Monsieur Popov!*" he exclaimed. "How are you, my dear Monsieur Popov? And when did you leave Dresden?"

"What's all this nonsense about Popov and Dresden?" Pecquot asked, calm on the surface, but, I could realize, internally startled.

"Oh, nothing, nothing," Aramond said, smiling broadly. "Only I happened to be in Dresden the other day, and I saw a gentleman there who must have been your twin brother. But that couldn't be, could it? For the resemblance surprised me so much that I took the trouble to make inquiries, and found his name was Popov. You don't mind my little joke, do you, my dear Popov?—excuse me, my

dear Pecquot, of course! Now I'm getting quite confused about who you really are! . . .

"But I don't think I know your friends, my dear Pecquot. Would you be kind enough?—thank you so much. Admiral Beaulieu? But of course, Admiral, I know all about you! Just out of Königstein, I hear. You were lucky to get away from there. . . . What name did you say? Darceau! Ah, then you must be the Captain Darceau who was General de Rensac's ordnance officer. How interesting! A great man, the general—still in Königstein, unfortunately. No news from him, I suppose? No, naturally not. And Monsieur Lambert. Very happy to meet you, sir. You always have interesting friends, my dear Pecquot.

"What a shame, Captain Darceau, that General de Rensac is not with us here today. He could be very useful to France at this moment. I suppose you will see him shortly, Pecquot—when you go to Königstein."

"How in the world did you find that out?" Pecquot asked.

Aramond laughed lightly.

"Oh, I hear a great many things, my boy. I have friends everywhere, you know. And speaking of friends, you can do me a very great favor, if you will. When you get to Königstein, will you give my regards, my very best regards, to General de Rensac, and tell him that his friends have not forgotten him?"

"With pleasure, if I get to see him," Pecquot said. "I'm not sure I shall. I'm not head of the mission, you know."

"I'm sure you will," Aramond returned with a chuckle. "Just don't forget my little remembrance, if you do."

"It seems to me that Colonel Gabriel delivered almost that identical message for you some time ago," Admiral Beaulieu interjected.

"Once more won't hurt," Aramond said easily. "We still haven't forgotten him. He might like a little reassurance."

"To speak frankly," Beaulieu went on, "General de Rensac was rather surprised at the message. He said that he had only met you casually."

"Well, now," said Aramond, "it may be that I didn't make much impression on him, but he made a heavy impression on me. It's true I don't know him very well at present, but I do hope to have the

opportunity of becoming better acquainted with him in the future—much better acquainted. You might tell him that, too, Pecquot, and that I shall be happy, if I am ever able, to do anything in my power to aid him. And you might add that we all hope to see him back with us soon—back in the service of France.”

“It’s getting to be rather a lengthy message,” Pecquot smiled, “but I’ll deliver it—if I see him.”

“Yes, of course,” Aramond said, “*if* you see him.” And he bared his teeth in a broad smile. “Well, I must be off. Enchanted to have met you all.” And as he took Pecquot’s hand in his, cordially pressing his elbow with his left hand as he took leave of him with an amiability which hardly accorded with the unfavorable report Pecquot had been giving us, he added: “You won’t hold my silly little joke about Popov against me, will you, *cher ami*?”

And with that he was gone.

“Well,” said Pecquot. “Now what do you think of that?”

“The message to Rensac?” Beaulieu asked. “I don’t know. As he first gave it to you, it was identical with the earlier one—and as I said, Rensac was surprised at hearing from a man he knew so casually. Seems insistent on it, doesn’t he?”

“It isn’t that,” Pecquot said. “What upsets me is that he must have seen me in Dresden.”

“You mean you were there?” Darceau asked.

“Yes. You others knew that,” Pecquot said. “I went there to meet Maria. But how in the world did he discover that I was using the name of Popov? I had a Bulgarian passport in that name—got it through some connections in the Bulgarian Consulate at Vichy. It’s a little easier for a Bulgarian to move around in Germany than a Frenchman—unless your name happens to be Aramond. . . . He might have followed me to my hotel, I suppose, and learned how I was registered. He knows about the Königstein mission, too. He said he was exceptionally well informed. He certainly seems to be. Too well informed for comfort, in my opinion.”

“You don’t suppose he has reported you to the Germans, do you?” Darceau asked. “If he’s as collaborationist as you say, he might have done that.”

“I doubt it,” Pecquot said. “He’s collaborationist because he wants

to help himself rather than because he wants to help them. He probably prefers to keep his knowledge to himself in case he decides to blackmail me some day. . . . Well, there's no use worrying about it. If he knows, he knows. I don't see that it can do any harm to our plans."

XLI

In Readiness

IT GAVE me a curious sensation to return to the village of Königstein on an official mission, and to look upward at the cone-shaped mountain under such different circumstances. Now I was a free man, but I still felt fettered and restrained because I was unable, near as I was, to go up to the castle and greet my old comrades there. Instead, I had to remain below, surrounded only by the unfamiliar, staring faces of Germans, who gazed incredulously at our French uniforms whenever we showed ourselves.

The members of our small group were quartered at the *Gastwirtschaft*, where Pecquot, I knew, had long ago had his meeting with Maria Günther. Early in the morning, the leaders of the group went up to the fortress, leaving me behind. They were spared the laborious climb through the tunnel. The freight elevator was sent down for them, and they were able to ride upward at their ease.

They were gone for the better part of the day, and I was at a loss to amuse myself during their absence. I spent most of it in the main taproom of the inn, speculating idly on the identity of Maria's messenger in the village, and wondering whether it was the same person who had transmitted to me the letter whose discovery in my coat pocket had been so mystifying.

One idea that I had acquired, perhaps from something Pecquot had said, was that the messenger of Maria might have been the innkeeper. I watched him curiously as he bustled about behind the bar, but somehow I couldn't envisage Maria confiding in him. He was a typical German tavern owner, fat, stupid, and rather greasy in appearance. I gave him up as an impossible candidate.

A customer entered whom the innkeeper greeted obsequiously as

"*Herr Bürgermeister.*" I included the mayor of the village in my speculations. This was getting up on a plane where Maria would be more likely to move. He seemed a dignified, well-educated sort of chap; but he displayed a Nazi party emblem prominently, which seemed to rule him out. That might have been purely a political gesture, of course; but then, on the other hand, it was rather unlikely that the Nazis were allowing any persons not thoroughly tested to act as mayors of their towns.

It was while I was studying the mayor that the door swung open, and with a shock, I realized that the newcomer was a man who knew me. I suddenly felt the protection of my new-grown moustache as quite inadequate, and I turned my head aside (I was standing at the bar) in order to avoid recognition. The man who had entered was Herr Fliegert, the owner of the moving picture theatre whose machine I had repaired, and who had aroused my antagonism by what seemed to me to be his prying manner.

To my horror, he came up to the bar too, stood beside me and ordered a beer. I still kept my head averted, as much as I could without making my avoidance of his gaze conspicuous, but as he put down his glass after a healthy swallow, he happened to glance at me, and I saw a puzzled expression come over his face. He wrinkled his brow, regarded my uniform, and then asked, in halting French:

"I beg your pardon. Haven't I seen you somewhere before?"

I shook my head.

"I don't believe so," I said.

I was afraid that if he recognized me, he would suspect that I was escaping from Königstein and would report me. Naturally, my own situation was orthodox enough, but if my presence were known at the fortress, suspicions might be aroused which would cause special precautions to be taken, and our escape plans might be spoiled.

Herr Fliegert appeared still as inquisitive as I had found him before. He asked me a few questions about what I was doing there, where else I had been in Germany, and so forth, and it was obvious that he was trying to place me, but hadn't succeeded. I judged that the fact that it had not been too light in the projection booth when I had fixed his machine, plus the added touch of my new moustache, prevented him from making the proper associations to spot me, but

I was on pins and needles all the time. As soon as I could manage it without appearing to run away, I excused myself and went to my room, leaving him staring into the mirror across the bar, his brow wrinkled in thought.

Pecquot returned to the inn very late. He had been extremely fortunate. He and Colonel Gabriel had been invited to stay for dinner, and after the meal was over, Gabriel and Günther had fallen into conversation, and Maria had seized the opportunity to offer to show Pecquot some of the interesting points of the former museum. Thus they had been able to have a long conversation.

She told Pecquot that it was Günther who had insisted that she return to Königstein, thus ending her plans for an escape through the Dresden Hospital. It was almost immediately after the departure of the naval prisoners that he had visited her, voiced his disapproval of what she was doing, and obliged her to give up her work as a nurse.

"It's not proper for a general's wife to be waiting on privates, even if they are wounded," he said. "Your place is with your husband. I don't understand whatever possessed you to go into this sort of work anyway."

There was nothing Maria could do except obey. She knew it was useless to argue with Günther, once he had made up his mind. She was afraid that Verger and Rensac might have themselves transferred to the hospital after she had left, and she set in her window the signal which had been agreed upon to mean: "Cancel former plans." This, obviously, was the incomprehensible message to which Verger had referred in his letter. Naturally, they couldn't realize what it meant since they were ignorant that any plans had been made.

"Then I discussed my escape plan with her," Pecquot continued, "and she agreed that it ought to work."

"Suppose you discuss it with me, then," I said. "If I'm to participate in it, I ought at least to know what it is. So far as I'm concerned, you're still keeping it dark."

"Patience, patience, Lambert," Pecquot laughed. "Everything in its time. You'll know soon enough."

"I'll be more confiding than you are," I said. "I have some news for you. It worries me a little. I think I may have been recognized today. The man didn't place me at once, but he may remember later when he saw me last, and I'm afraid he may suspect something."

"Who?" Pecquot asked. "Who might have known you? One of the guards?"

"No," I said. "It was the man who owns the local moving picture theatre. He's too inquisitive. I thought he acted suspiciously when I saw him before."

"Herr Fliegert!" Pecquot exclaimed, bursting into a roar of laughter. "So Herr Fliegert is worrying you!"

"Yes, that's his name," I said. "How do you know it?"

"My dear Lambert," Pecquot said. "Don't worry. I assure you there is nothing to fear from Herr Fliegert."

"But suppose he remembers that I was a prisoner and reports me," I protested. "Won't that make them think something is funny?"

"You don't understand," Pecquot said. "I have very good reason for telling you not to be disturbed about Fliegert. He happens to be Maria's friend in the village—the one she had in mind, when she told me before the war that we might correspond with each other. I'm not surprised that he questioned you, for as an anti-Nazi in a Nazi country, he believes in keeping his eyes and ears wide open. And he is the chap who put that letter in your pocket!"

"While I was fixing the machine!" I exclaimed. "I remember now! I took my coat off to work more freely, and hung it over the chair . . . yes, I see it all now. So that was when the message was delivered! . . . But why didn't you tell me that before?"

"Didn't know it myself," Pecquot answered. "Maria told me last night, when I was explaining to her that the generals never got her message. It seems the letter Admiral Beaulieu got was expected to reach you before the show which you saw. It meant that you were to go to the rear of the hall. Then Fliegert was going to give you the letter. You didn't get the message, and if it hadn't been for the accident of the projector breaking down, Fliegert wouldn't have been able to identify you. He couldn't speak to you because there was a guard with you, but he did manage to put the letter in your pocket. Simple when you know, isn't it?"

Fliegert, Maria had told Pecquot, was a descendant of an old Saxon family which had once owned most of the land around Königstein. Like most Saxons, he had never liked the Prussians; and his dislike mounted to hate when the post-war inflation of the 1920's wrecked the family fortunes, and obliged him to sell out most of his holdings—a disaster for which he blamed the Prussian régime. Then the Nazis came to power. He had left only the theatre, and a few acres of land at the foot of the mountain. When Günther took over the museum, he persuaded the authorities to expropriate Fliegert's last bit of land to provide an approach to the museum. Since that time, to the hatred he had always felt for the Prussians, he had added a special grudge for the Nazis in general and Günther in particular, but had always been friendly to Maria, and became more so when he began to understand that she disliked her husband.

"Fliegert is a member of the French underground as of tomorrow," said Pecquot. "He's going to be the key man for our escape. Our luck couldn't have been better, for I had intended to take advantage of the darkness in the moving picture theatre for the escape anyhow; with Fliegert to help us, I don't see how we can fail."

"You don't mean to say that you are actually going to tell me at last what the scheme is?" I asked.

Pecquot laughed.

"I think I might as well now," he answered. "And you can take credit, if you want, for suggesting it to me. In the accounts you gave me of your prison life, the only chance I saw to get our friends out was to do it at one of the moving picture performances—that is, to stage the escape on the one occasion when they would already be down off the mountain, rather than to try to get them off it ourselves. That's why I promoted the idea of showing this film to the prisoners. . . . Didn't you wonder why I asked you, at the time when you were telling me about the moving picture shows, whether they checked each man off on the way back? When you told me that they simply relied on a close guard, I knew that was our answer. Of course, I hadn't figured out then exactly how we would go about it."

"And how *are* you going to go about it?" I asked.

"Like this," Pecquot explained. "I have arranged with Günther to

bring the generals down to the village to see the propaganda film tomorrow evening. I've already managed to get a few minutes with Fliegert, and have told him that we are going to try to spirit two of the generals away during the performance. I showed him a note from Maria to prove that he could trust me, and he's willing to do anything we say."

"I hope we can trust *him*," I said.

"I'm sure we can," Pecquot said. "I know an honest man when I see him. Fliegert's an honest man—and he hates the Nazis. He's already given me an important tip. We've got to cross the Elbe on the ferry, because the road to Switzerland is on the other side, and there's no other place we can cross. He tells me there are guards on the ferry, and control is very strict, unless you're known to be a local inhabitant.

"Now Fliegert knows one of the guards who's on duty at the time when we'll be wanting to cross, and he says he can fix it to let us through—especially if we hand out a little tip, which is the least of our worries. Fliegert is going to take me to see him early tomorrow morning, when there won't be many people about—I don't want to be seen around the ferry or with any one who has anything to do with it, before we have to cross. Then I'll come back here, and we'll go over to the theatre together. That will look natural enough, because we are supposed to be arranging for the showing of the film. Actually, we want to look the place over and arrange all the details in advance, as minutely as possible, so there won't be any slips."

"What we have to do—and I still do not know exactly how we are going to do that—is to spirit the two generals out during the performance while the lights are out—we will probably have to fake an accident to the film, and stop the picture, so that there won't even be any light from the screen—and hide them in Fliegert's garage. As soon as the way is clear we will cross the ferry and drive them to the Swiss border. We won't even have to use one of our cars, which would be too conspicuous. Fliegert will let us use his. It's in first-rate condition, he says, and has an extra tank—not much gas in it, but we can siphon out some of ours. And we may get some on the way.

"Now here is what you have to do: First, get Fliegert's car in

readiness tomorrow. Make sure that it's in perfect condition for the trip. Second, get into the projection room with Fliegert before the generals arrive, so that you won't be seen by any one likely to recognize you. When we get the generals out of the crowd in the darkness, you will have to lead them to the garage. I met Verger on the mountain, introduced myself—I saw at once that he recognized the name—and gave him a veiled hint that he and Rensac should be in readiness the next day. I didn't have a chance to make any detailed explanations. Tomorrow, I may have an opportunity to get up to the castle again, and if I do I will ask permission to pay my respects to Rensac, as the highest ranking general there; and I hope I'll be able to give him definite instructions. If not—well, we'll have to trust to luck and to their ability to seize the situation quickly."

XLII

Improvisation

WHEN I awoke the next morning, I found that Pecquot had already gone out. He returned in the best of humor.

"Everything's working beautifully," he said. "Fliegert had his man all primed, and the only thing that interested him was earning the 500 marks I gave him. Luck seems to be with us. He told us that ordinarily he might have had trouble, for his chief is extremely strict. He expects a promotion, and he's not taking any chances of making a slip—particularly as he was told to exercise special care when Königstein was made a prison. But the chief guard is off on his vacation, and Fliegert's friend is in charge during his absence. So everything's in fine shape. . . . Anything happened here?"

I told Pecquot that Colonel Gabriel and the officers with him had already gone up to the fortress, knowing that Pecquot intended to stay in the village to prepare for the presentation of the film.

"Perfect," said Pecquot. "Let's go over to the theatre, then. By the way, this suitcase is all packed, ready for tonight. We'll need it then. You might as well bring it along now."

I picked up the suitcase without asking what it contained, having by now been well schooled in Pecquot's love of concealment.

Fliegert was waiting at the theatre for us. We looked the situation over, and worked out our plan of action.

The last row of seats in the theatre was interrupted at either end by a column, leaving two seats separated from the rest at each end of the row. On the left side were the entrance doors; the right side was a blank wall. At previous performances, as Fliegert and myself both remembered, guards had been stationed along the left wall at each door, but there had been none on the right, where they would have been pointless, since there were no exits there.

The projection booth had two doors, one at the left, through which Fliegert normally entered, and another at the right, usually locked, near the two seats behind the column. Our scheme, therefore, was that Pecquot would get word to Rensac and Verger to sit in the last row in the two isolated seats on the right-hand side, half-hidden behind the column, and when the signal was given, they would simply enter the projection booth from the right-hand door—which was shielded from the sight of the guards by the booth itself. They would remain there until the performance was over and the theatre had apparently been emptied, and then I would lead them out to Fliegert's garage.

The signal was to be given by Pecquot. He would in any case be on the platform, commenting on the film, which had no spoken commentary on its sound track. He would therefore be facing the audience, and in a position to keep an eye on every one in the hall. Whenever he judged the moment appropriate, he would introduce the word "aspiration" into his talk "(And I'll have to be careful not to use it accidentally before I'm ready," he remarked, grinning), whereupon Fliegert would cut off the light in the projection machine and the two generals would slide out. Stoppages of the film were common enough incidents with the antique equipment of the theatre so that there would be no suspicion.

After the performance, Pecquot would join us in the garage, and we would cross the ferry and make for Switzerland. If he failed to show up in half an hour, I was to start off with the generals without him. He gave me an envelope containing detailed instructions and maps which he had prepared to show me the route.

"But there will be some German border control, won't there?" I objected. "What do I do about that?"

Pecquot produced four passports from his pocket and handed me three of them.

"There you are, Miladinov," he said. "And you'd better start memorizing that name. There are three Bulgarian passports for you, complete with photographs—and don't ask how I got them. I have one for myself here—the same one I came to Dresden with before. My name, as you should remember, is Popov. Bulgarian passports are

highly respected by German frontier officials. You'll have no trouble with these."

"Maybe not," I said. "But I certainly hope you come with me. I haven't much experience in this sort of thing."

"Oh, I'll make it," said Pecquot. "It's just in case of slips. Now I'm going up the mountain again. You go with Fliegert. He'll show you his garage. Get the car in order, and take this suitcase over there." And he pushed towards me the suitcase which he had had me bring out of the hotel.

"There are four civilian suits in there," he said. "I advise you and the generals to put yours on in the garage while you're waiting for me—unless you prefer to combine Bulgarian passports and French uniforms."

An idea suddenly struck me.

"If we have to go alone," I said, "we'll certainly be caught. I don't know a word of Bulgarian."

"Neither do I," said Pecquot, "and neither does any German frontier guard I ever met. Now run along. You've got work to do."

I was quite ashamed of my original suspicions of Fliegert when I discovered how earnestly he desired to help us, and what risks he was willing to undergo to do so. At first we spoke French, but when I told him that I understood German, he switched to that language, and with the greater fluency which his native tongue gave him, he proceeded to pour out all the bitterness he felt towards the Nazis—or rather, "the Prussians," for he refused to attribute the sins of the German régime to the Nazi Party alone.

I had expected to be obliged somehow or other to siphon off gas surreptitiously from our cars to fill Fliegert's tanks. But he had already thought of the fuel problem, and had filled up both the regular tank and a reserve tank with gasoline bought on the Black Market. The tires were in good condition and properly inflated. One change I made was to replace the regular license tag with a false one, which Pecquot had provided. He seemed to have thought of everything. If we should be held up, of course, the substitute plate would have deceived no one for very long, but Pecquot's theory was

that if the disappearance of Fliegert's car should be discovered at the same time as that of the generals, the shift in number plates might prevent our car from being stopped before it had crossed the frontier.

Our preparations made, I entered the projection room with Fliegert, well in advance of the hour when the generals were due to arrive. In addition to the slits through which the projector threw its beams, there were others for the use of the operator; and it was through these that I watched the hall filling up when our audience finally appeared, after what had seemed to me, in my somewhat nervous condition, an interminable wait. To my surprise, I saw Maria Günther arrive with the General, who had evidently been invited to view the French propaganda film along with his prisoners. Colonel Gabriel was with them, and they all sat down well up towards the front, Gabriel on Günther's left, and Maria on his right. I wondered if she had managed to get her husband to bring her along in order that she might be at hand to help in the escape plans.

Vergier and Rensac were among the first to enter, and I saw them make for the two isolated rear seats and sit down there, almost under my nose. Pecquot had been able to communicate the plan to them, then. So far, so good! It looked as though we might expect everything to go off smoothly.

The house lights were turned out. Pecquot began his commentary from the stage as the picture began. And then something happened that wasn't in our program. The machine broke down.

"Damn it!" said Fliegert. "Why do we have to have a real breakdown now when we're going to have to fake one later? It's too early to smuggle the generals out now. They might be missed before the end of the show. Just before we finish is the best time . . . I think I'd better turn on the house lights so they won't get confused and try to leave too soon. Hope this doesn't bring any Germans in to see what's wrong."

He switched on the lights. Pecquot apologized for what seemed to be mechanical difficulty, asked for patience, and then left the stage and made for the projection booth.

"Thought I'd better come up here to make sure nobody else did," he whispered to us, as he came in. "Much trouble?"

I was already in the vitals of the projector.

"Nothing important," I said. "I can have it going again in a few minutes."

"Good," said Pecquot. He stepped out of the booth, and announced "Keep your seats, everybody. Just a slight accident to the projector. We'll be able to resume the showing in a moment."

He stepped back in, and took up a position behind the observation slit which I had just left while I worked on the mechanism.

"That's bad," he said, gazing through the window. "Günther is coming back this way. Hope he isn't planning to look in here. I don't want him to see you, Lambert. If he should open the door, keep your back to him and your head in the machine. I'll explain your being in here some way. . . . Ah! He's not coming here. He came back to speak to Rensac. I don't like that either. . . . Now what the devil is Rensac up to? He's going up front with Günther. How are we going to get him out from there? . . . Hmm. Günther must have invited him to meet his wife. He's introducing them now. . . . Damn it! He's sitting down with them. How does he expect to extricate himself from there, I wonder? Unless Maria can do something about it, of course. She moved one seat farther over to let Rensac sit next to Günther, so she's on the other side of him. Maybe she'll manage to break it up."

"Why don't you try to break it up yourself?" I asked. "If you can think of some excuse to speak to Günther—apologize for the delay, perhaps, or tell him that we're doing our best—that might distract him from Rensac, and then Maria may be able to get him out of there. We'll hold up starting the film again as long as we can, so that you won't have to go right back onto the stage—but if we see Rensac start back here, we'll switch out the lights immediately to prevent Günther from holding onto him."

"Might as well try it," Pecquot said.

The machine was fixed, and we were only waiting the proper moment to start projecting again, so I was able to follow Pecquot's progress through the observation slit. I saw him stop and speak to Verger; but then, to my great surprise, Verger stood up and walked forward with Pecquot.

"What in the world are they doing?" I asked, bewildered. "Now he's getting *both* of them up in front."

Pecquot and Verger approached Günther, who rose politely as they stopped and addressed him. Verger spoke with Günther for a moment, and then looked about as if seeking a vacant place. Maria and Rensac quickly rose and started to move over to make room for Verger next to Günther. At the same moment, Pecquot cupped his hands, and called back, in German: "Aren't you ready yet, back there?" Fliegert understood at once what he wanted, threw the house switch and the lights went out. He started the projector, and Pecquot, returning to the stage, resumed his commentary.

Peering through the observation slit, I couldn't make out what was going on in the front of the house. There were a few confused shadows in the general direction of the Günther party, but I was unable to see what was going on. In an instant, I saw a dark shadow appear just before the projection booth and slip into one of the two seats, so I knew either Verger or Rensac had returned. Since I had seen Verger last in the act of sitting down beside Günther, I assumed that the newcomer was Rensac.

The rest of the showing of the film was uneventful. At last, shortly before the end, as had been agreed, Pecquot worked in the signal word. Fliegert immediately shut off the light of the projector, and called through one of the slits in the booth: "We'll only be a minute this time, everybody. Just be patient, please." Pecquot, from the stage, translated this into French, and added a few remarks to hold every one's attention to the front of the house.

Meanwhile I had quickly opened the right-hand door of the booth and slipped out. Rensac (I could recognize him at such close range even in the darkness) had left his seat and was feeling his way along its wall. I took him by the elbow, guided him to the door of the projection room, and let him in. Then I closed the door behind me. Fliegert switched the projector on again.

Protected by the hum of the projector, I was able to talk to Rensac. "What happened, *mon général*?" I asked. "Why did General Verger go up to sit with Günther?"

"You know as much as I do," said Rensac. "We couldn't very well talk it over in front of Günther. However, I think it's obvious

enough. Verger and myself had agreed that in case only one of us could get away on the first try I was to make the attempt. Günther invited me to sit with himself and his wife, and I didn't dare refuse, for fear of arousing suspicions. So I imagine Verger came up and took my place beside Günther to help me get away again. Maria helped, too, by sitting down between Verger and myself. That put me two seats away from Günther, on the outside—and I found it very easy in the general confusion to keep on going and get back here."

"Can't we get General Verger still?" I asked. I turned to Fliegert. "Suppose we pretend there's a short circuit at the end of the performance, so that every one has to leave in the dark? Perhaps Verger could slip away too in the confusion?"

"*Nicht gut*," said Fliegert. "If there's no light, they may start checking the prisoners. If the lights go up, and the guards see every one is out, there'll be no suspicions. Two of them always stay to the end, and then walk through the aisles, to make sure that no one is left behind, before I lock up. My idea is to step out of the booth as usual, lock the door—just in case any one should take it into his head to open it—and, after the guards have made their usual inspection, go out with them, and shut up for the night. Then, as soon as they've gone, I'll come back and let you out again."

"I think he's right," Rensac said. "We'd better not do anything that might arouse suspicion. If Verger can't get away on his own, we'd better leave him for next time. Otherwise, neither of us will get away."

The film ended. Fliegert switched on the lights, stepped out of the projection room, and we heard the lock click behind him. The door on the other side we had already bolted from within. Rensac and I were left in the dark, except for the bright beams of light which streamed through the slits in the front wall of the booth.

I watched anxiously through the observation hole, holding my breath to see if the generals would get out without Rensac's absence being noticed. Every one was standing at once, many of the generals were chatting in little groups, and there was so much confusion that I thought the chances were good of getting away with it. Some

of the collaborationist generals seemed quite enthusiastic about the picture, while a few of the anti-collaborationists wore expressions of frank disgust. Those near the back moved slowly towards the door. I prayed internally for them to start going out, for once the exodus began, no one looking about for Rensac would be surprised if he were not still in the theatre.

"Why don't they start out?" I ejaculated. "If they keep milling around, some one's sure to notice the General is missing."

I saw Verger rise, bow to Günther and Maria and start for the back of the theatre.

"General Verger is coming towards us," I reported to the other two. "I hope he isn't going to try to come in here now!"

"Goodness, no!" Fliegert said in alarm. "The guards would be sure to notice it, with all the lights on. He'll give us all away!"

I breathed a sigh of relief.

"It's all right," I said. "He's starting them out. He must have thought, as I did, that unless they begin moving, General de Rensac will be missed."

For Verger had taken two officers, one on either side, by the elbow, and was propelling them gently towards the door as he chatted with them, while several others fell naturally in behind him.

It was none too soon. I turned my eyes towards Günther, and saw him look towards the place Rensac had occupied, then lean over and speak to Maria, who was just rising from her seat, with what seemed to be an interrogative gesture. Maria turned, looked towards Rensac's empty place as though surprised at not seeing him there, and then shrugged her shoulders expressively, as though to say: "I don't know. I didn't see where he went."

Günther turned slowly, and began running his eyes over the audience. I was certain he was looking for Rensac and my blood seemed to stand still in my veins.

"General Günther is looking for you, *mon général*," I reported to Rensac, who was keeping well back from the slits in the booth. "Now he's standing up . . . he's running his eyes over the officers near the doors."

"No wonder he's looking for me," Rensac said ruefully. "I was entirely too friendly to him—as never before—for obvious reasons.

I suppose I sounded so nearly convinced by his arguments that he wants to continue the talk. . . . He certainly can't fail to realize that I'm not in the auditorium. It's not big enough for him to miss that."

"He's spotted Verger," I relayed to my two listeners. "He hadn't quite steered his convoy through the door. . . . He just called something out to him. I couldn't hear him, but if my lip reading is any good, he asked Verger if he had seen you. . . . Now Verger's turning back—and nobody's gone out. . . . It looks bad, *mon général*—perhaps you ought to give up and slip out the other door again in order not to be caught in the attempt—Wait! What's happening to Maria?"

"Well what is it?" Rensac demanded excitedly. "What's going on out there? What's all the uproar?"

Maria had uttered a sudden piercing cry, pressed her right hand tightly over her left breast, and seized Günther's arm with her left hand. He turned towards her startled, as her grip relaxed, and she slid softly to the floor.

Everything else forgotten, Günther bellowed: "*Holt den Doktor!*" and knelt beside Maria, pulling out a handkerchief and fanning her with it. Colonel Gabriel hurried over to offer assistance. A guard came running up with water, and while Günther held Maria's head, Pecquot, who had knelt on the other side of her, poured a little of it down her throat. She raised her head feebly, and with the three men helping her, got up, and, leaning heavily on her husband, proceeded with them slowly towards the door.

"A most providential fainting spell," Rensac said. "I'm sure Günther was looking about to see what had happened to me when this drove it out of his head."

"I doubt if it was a coincidence, *mon général*," I said. "I understand that Frau Günther is a very clever woman."

They passed close to the projection booth on the way to the exit. I could hear Maria saying:

"I'm so sorry. It was very silly of me. I think it must have been the heat."

"Do you feel better now, my dear?" Günther asked, in the most tender tones I had ever heard from him.

"I don't feel well at all," Maria answered. "I feel so weak! I don't know what's wrong with me."

"She's keeping his mind on her," I thought. "Bravo!"

Meanwhile I had my eye also on Verger, who was again moving slowly towards the exits with the other generals, but was now obviously trying to draw back from them, with the hope of slipping away. I didn't think he could make it, with the theatre lights on. Fortunately, circumstances prevented him from making the fatal attempt. One of his friends came up behind him, took him by the elbow, and steered him along the aisle towards the door. There was nothing for Verger to do except go along with the others.

"Poor Verger," said Rensac. "I hoped to the last minute that he might be able to make it—but I guess it's better that he didn't try."

The two guards at the doors nearest the screen fell in behind the departing officers and walked slowly up the aisles, staring piercingly along each row of seats. Fliegert began locking the exit doors, starting at the front. The guards arrived at the rear of the theatre and waited while Fliegert put out the lights from an outside switch, and then the three went out together by the last door, which Fliegert no doubt locked behind him as he had planned.

I unbolted the far door of the projection booth and swung it open to give us some air (it was stiflingly hot in the confined space of the booth), but Rensac and I agreed that it would be safer to remain inside until Fliegert came for us. I kept my hand on the doorknob, ready to swing it shut in case of necessity, but nothing unexpected happened. Fliegert was back in ten minutes, and together we went to his garage.

XLIII

Escape

RENSAC AND I had changed into our civilian clothes, but Pecquot had still not shown up. I looked at my watch.

"Half an hour since we got here," I said. "Pecquot said to start without him if he wasn't here by then."

"You know what to do without him?" Rensac asked.

"No," I said. "Captain Pecquot doesn't believe in telling any of his plans ahead of time—but I have his written instructions. We might as well give him the time it takes me to inspect them."

I took from my pocket the Bulgarian passports and the maps Pecquot had given me, which were in a large envelope, together with typed directions in case he failed to join us—and also, as I discovered when I took them out, a number of German bills.

"That ought to be enough to cover all emergencies," I said, ruffling through them. "General, I suggest we divide this in case we get separated." And I handed him half the bills, putting the rest back in my pocket.

I checked through the other papers in the envelope. There was a license for the temporary export of the car, giving the same number as our false license plate, and a blank for filling in the engine number, which Fliegert quickly supplied for us. The map showed our route, while Pecquot's typed instructions covered whatever the map failed to show. It seemed that we were to make for Singen, in Baden, on the Swiss frontier, and simply show our Bulgarian passports. There was also a letter in German on Bulgarian official stationery confirming in highfalutin language that the four of us were members of a Bulgarian mission providing the German Army with various food materials.

"We may have some explaining to do because we're not four, as the letter says," I remarked. "If Pecquot were with us, at least, we would be three of the four. If we have to leave without him, we will probably have to say that half of our mission went back to Bulgaria. We are, according to this letter, going to Switzerland to settle some banking matters in connection with our food imports to Germany."

Pecquot had estimated that the trip would take 14 hours, including the crossing on the ferry and the time we would have to spend to refuel on the way. He had allowed for a stop at Furth, near Nuremberg, and had supplied instructions for contacting there a Polish citizen working for the British Intelligence Service, who was to see to the refilling of our tanks. He would also provide us with food, to make it unnecessary for us to stop anywhere for that purpose.

Having digested the instructions, I stood up resignedly.

"Well," I said, "something has happened to Pecquot. We'll have to start off alone."

I got into the driver's seat, and Rensac got in beside me. Fliegert opened the garage doors, and without turning on any lights, I started to drive slowly out of the garage.

At that moment, a man appeared around the corner, and hailed us, before we reached the street with: "What's your hurry?"

It was Pecquot!

I have never been so glad to see any one in my life. I had been terrified at the prospect of having to make this trip through Germany on my own, knowing nothing of possible unexpected difficulties, or of the resources of Pecquot's organization, in case of trouble.

"Sorry to be late," Pecquot said. "I just couldn't get away immediately. Everything was all right, at least up to the time the generals started up the hill. No one had missed Rensac and Günther was too much worried about Maria to give him another thought. Just allow me time to make a quick shift to civilian clothes, Lambert, and I'll drive. I know the road."

I got out willingly, and shifted to the back seat. Pecquot, hurrying into the garage, emerged in an incredibly short time in mufti, got in beside Rensac, and off we started, leaving behind us the diminishing shadowy bulk of the mountain of Königstein.

"It's damn dark, but this ought to be the right road," said Pecquot, swinging around a corner. "It should take us to the Elbe. The main thing is to get across that ferry as quickly as possible, and put the river between us and Königstein. Then it's a straight road southwest to Switzerland. The only other route would be to go back on this side of the river to Dresden, but control is stiff there, and it's too big a city for me to be able to fix a sure way through it. Besides, just in case they miss the general immediately, we'd better be over the river. They're sure to notify all crossing points the moment they find he's gone."

We were almost at the ferry when a man ran out into the road in front of us, signalling to us to stop. Pecquot pulled up sharply, narrowly avoiding running him down. "What is it now?" I wondered. "Are they after us already?"

"*Sie sind es!*" the man who had stopped us said. "I thought you'd have to come this way. I was waiting for you to tell you that something has gone wrong."

It was the ferry guard Pecquot had seen that morning.

"What's the matter?" Pecquot asked. "Why aren't you on the ferry?"

"Something's funny," the guard said. "My chief came back today—called back by telegram from his vacation, he said. He told me to take a day off duty—sent the other guard away, too. He's handling the ferry alone tonight. It's most unusual. . . . Do you suppose it could have anything to do with you?"

"No, no," said Pecquot lightly. "We're not that important."

"There's another thing," the man said hesitantly, "about that 500 marks—I suppose I should give it back now."

"Forget about it," said Pecquot. "It's yours. Thanks for coming to meet us."

The German melted away into the darkness, mumbling effusive thanks.

"What do we do now?" Rensac asked. "Had we better try Dresden? The changing of the guards looks curious. Do you suppose they've discovered my escape?"

"It couldn't be that," said Pecquot. "They called the man back from his vacation—you haven't been missing for an hour. No, it's

something else. Just a piece of bad luck. *Tant pis!* It's too late to turn back, and Dresden would be more dangerous than this route. We'll just have to find out how good our Bulgarian credentials are."

He put the car in gear, and drove onto the ferry slip. The boat was out, and we had a ten-minute wait, which we spent in the car, preferring not to step outside of its protecting shadow. We stopped talking also, in order not to be heard using a foreign language. Fortunately there were few people about—two other cars, apparently belonging to farmers, and one or two persons on foot.

The boat pulled in, we drove aboard, and it started across the river before any one checked us. For a moment I thought we were perhaps going to escape questioning, but then a guard came up to the side of the car. In the dark we couldn't see his face, but he had a rough, brutal voice, like the typical *Feldwebel*.

"*Wohin gehen die Herren?*" he asked. "*Papiere, bitte!*"

I held my breath as he took our three Bulgarian passports. He opened them, and glanced at them briefly. "*Herr Popov, Herr Miladinov, Herr Zheliev,*" he read. "*Bulgaren, nicht wahr?*"

Pecquot started to hand him the Bulgarian letter, saying, "Bulgarian food mission," but the guard waved it away.

"It is not necessary," he said. "The Bulgarian food mission, quite right. Everything is in order, *meine Herren*."

And he saluted and handed us back our passports. We didn't dare say anything to one another. When the boat grated to a stop in the slip on the other side of the river, we drove slowly off, unable to believe that there would be no further check. But that was all. We rolled off the pier, and onto the road for Switzerland.

"Looks as if you'd wasted 500 marks, my dear fellow," said Rensac, as soon as we were able to talk freely again. "That was easy. The passports were all we needed. Why, the fellow didn't even ask us what we were doing in Königstein!"

"We might have had some trouble if he'd started to ask questions," I said. "After all, what would a Bulgarian food mission be doing in Königstein?"

"It's curious," Pecquot said. "Not only did he fail to show any curiosity in foreigners being in the region of a military prison camp,

but all I had to say was 'Bulgarian food mission,' and he accepted it without question, and without the slightest surprise. He didn't even look at the letter. You would have thought a Bulgarian food mission was the one thing he expected to find on his ferry tonight."

"Maybe there is one," said Rensac. "Maybe it's in this region. Perhaps some real Bulgarians will turn up later, and have plenty of trouble, all on our account."

"You're joking," said Pecquot. "That would be too much of a coincidence. Perhaps he just wanted to act as though he knew all about everything that's going on. But I wonder if he takes every one's word so easily? . . . Oh, well, what do we care why he was so easy to get by, as long as he was? *Tant mieux*. There's only one hurdle more now, and that's the frontier. I hope it goes as easily. But tell me, *mon général*, when are they likely to miss you? Is there a morning roll-call?"

"I believe there is for the orderlies," Rensac said. "There's none for us. My orderly will miss me, of course—but Verger will take care of him, I imagine. Lieutenant Greffe usually comes through on a morning tour of inspection, but if he doesn't see me in my room, he may imagine that I'm out in the garden. It's very possible that they won't notice my absence until noon or thereabouts."

"Noon!" said Pecquot. "Hm! It's ten-thirty now. I figure 14 hours driving time, including the stop at Furth. That means that we'll reach the border about twelve-thirty tomorrow afternoon. If they find out at noon, that's a gap of a half-hour only. I don't suppose there'll be an alarm outside of the fortress until they've made a close check inside. That might give us another hour or so. Then it will take some time to get warnings to frontier points. I don't know. It's going to be pretty close. But we can't drive too fast. We don't want to attract attention."

As we rolled through the night, Pecquot explained why he had so nearly failed to leave with us. He and Gabriel, it appeared, had driven with Günther in his car as far as the elevator, helping him with Maria, who continued to complain of her condition, no doubt to keep her husband occupied. Pecquot confirmed our assumption that Maria's faint was a trick, with the double purpose of preventing Günther from looking for Rensac, and also, if possible, of giving Ver-

ger a chance to get away, in spite of his unselfish gesture in taking Rensac's place by Günther's side to let his superior escape. Originally, Gabriel had intended to go up to the castle with Günther, but because of Maria's condition, that arrangement was cancelled, and Gabriel returned with Pecquot to the *Gastwirtschaft*. He was apparently prepared to settle down for the evening in the bar, and Pecquot was only able to get away by pleading great fatigue, and the desire to get some sleep before leaving Königstein with the mission the following morning. Because he couldn't leave the inn without passing through the bar, Pecquot had to step out of his ground-floor window to join us.

"What's Gabriel going to do tomorrow when he doesn't find you?" Rensac asked.

"I don't know," Pecquot said, "but it won't matter much. I left a note for him, in which I apologized for having to hurry back to France, and promising to explain later to his satisfaction. My guess is that the mission will leave before your disappearance is discovered; and if it doesn't, I doubt if Gabriel will give me away. He wouldn't want the Germans to think, even if he thinks so himself, that a member of his mission arranged the escape. I may have to be very humble later, though."

We began to be hungry, for neither Pecquot nor I had had time to eat dinner, and Rensac, of course, had only had the meager prison fare. We ate some sandwiches Fliegert had prepared for us. I drove while Pecquot ate, and he relieved me again a little later. We reached Furth about one in the morning, and following a sketch-map which Pecquot had included in his instructions to me, we quickly found the underground station it located, a garage for transients.

Pecquot rang the night bell with two short peals and one long one—an agreed signal. A man quickly appeared at the door, and Pecquot said to him, in what I knew, from having read the instructions, was a password formula:

"I beg pardon. How far is it to Nuremberg?"

"You want to go to Nuremberg?" the garage keeper replied, giving the second part of the recognition signal.

"To Nuremberg and beyond," said Pecquot completing the signal.

The garage keeper pulled on a chain, and the door of the garage door rose to admit us.

"Drive in," he said, and after we had obeyed, he shut the door behind us. Then he switched on a light, glanced at Pecquot, and said: "But we have met before, I believe. Didn't you pass through here some months ago, sir?"

"On my way to Dresden," Pecquot said. "You have a good memory."

"A good memory is very useful sometimes," the underground worker said. "What do you need this time—enough gas to get to Dresden again?"

"On the contrary," said Pecquot. "We are coming from the direction of Dresden. Enough to get to Singen."

"Ah!" said the garage keeper. "The crossing is arranged?"

"Yes," said Pecquot. "Everything is ready."

The tanks were quickly replenished, and then the agent gave us a small package of food to carry us through to Switzerland, and wished us good luck. The garage door was hauled up, and we were off again, having lost only half an hour in Furth.

"Good time," said Pecquot. "We ought to make it all right."

"I noticed," Rensac said, "that though the man knew you by sight, he didn't address you by name."

"He doesn't know my name," Pecquot said. "It's better that way. What you don't know, you can't give away. I don't know his real name, for that matter—only the one he uses in his business."

Our good time held for the rest of our journey, and it was not long after noon when we reached the border. It was a warm day, and the guards seemed somewhat somnolent—not entirely, perhaps, from the sun, for I noticed several empty beer bottles standing on a wooden table inside the guardhouse.

It was a small *Grenzwache* (frontier post), located in a mountain pass, three miles south of Singen proper. There were three men there when we arrived, two of the *Grenzpolizei* (border police) and one *Zollbeamter* (customs officer). They checked our passports and looked at our export license for the car, asking one or two questions

which we found it easy to answer in German plenty good enough for Bulgarians. The letter confirming our official mission inspired them with great respect, and once again luck seemed to be with us.

The guards were just about to return our papers and wave us on when the lieutenant in command of the post turned up. He took our passports himself, looked through them hastily, then came up to the car and said something to Rensac. The General failed to understand, whereupon the Lieutenant spoke first to Pecquot and then to myself. Neither of us comprehended a word, and we looked at each other in bewilderment.

"Wie sagten Sie?" Pecquot asked.

Again the Lieutenant uttered an unintelligible sentence, which left all three of us still in the dark, until suddenly he switched to German and said: "It is odd, isn't it, gentlemen, that of you three 'Bulgarians,' not one can understand the language? Perhaps I don't speak it perfectly, but after all, I had no difficulty in the three years that I was in the military attaché's office at Sofia."

Pecquot quickly spoke up:

"Is it any stranger, Lieutenant, that you, a German, should speak Bulgarian, than that we Bulgarians should speak German? The fact is that we—my uncle, my cousin here and myself—were all brought up in Vienna. We're of Bulgarian nationality, but we have never had occasion to speak the language."

"It may not seem strange to you," said the Lieutenant coldly, "but it does to me. We will have to check your identity. In the meantime, you must remain here. I cannot permit you to pass without the approval of my superiors."

Ordering the guards to keep an eye on us and make sure we didn't try to rush the frontier, he went inside the guardhouse, where a moment later we heard him talking on the phone.

We got out of the car, and walked back and forth to stretch our legs, keeping out of earshot of the guards, who were watching us narrowly.

"What damned bad fortune to meet a Bulgarian-speaking officer in this hole!" Pecquot said. "Everything was going well, we had good luck all along the road—and now suddenly, at such a short distance

from Switzerland, where Darceau is waiting for us, we suddenly find ourselves in this mess!"

I glanced nervously at my watch. I was trying to imagine what was happening at Königstein—whether Rensac's disappearance had been discovered, whether even now, while we were being detained here, the message was not on the way to all frontier posts to watch for Rensac—and perhaps for Pecquot and myself as well. I looked towards Switzerland, wondering if we couldn't run for it. But we were in a narrow valley. There were high cliffs on either side of the road at this point, and the frontier barrier was down, blocking it completely. And the guards wore impressive holsters around their waists.

Pecquot followed the direction of my eyes, and shook his head.

"No good," he said. "We can't make a break for it unless they all go to sleep. And they look annoyingly awake now—much livelier than when we got here."

I looked at my watch again. One-fifteen! They must know at Königstein by now, I thought. Then I heard the sound of a car, driving fast, approaching the post. It was out of sight around a curve, but I visualized a Gestapo or military car, filled with soldiers looking for us.

It was a military car. It drove up with screeching brakes before the post, and a German colonel leaped out. He dashed into the guard-house.

"That must be the superior the Lieutenant was waiting for," Pecquot said. "He probably didn't dare order our arrest himself."

"It's all over," Rensac sighed. "Tomorrow I will be back in Königstein, in solitary confinement, probably. I am only sorry that you two got yourself into trouble trying to help me. Before we are separated, let me at least thank you with all my heart."

Then the door opened.

The Lieutenant no doubt had handed our passports to the Colonel, for as the two officers came out of the frontier post, the Colonel had them in his hand, and was ruffling through them.

"What's wrong with these papers?" he demanded. "Everything is in order, everything! These gentlemen are friends of the Reich!

They are helping to furnish our army with food! It is intolerable that they should have been subjected to delay!"

"But, *Herr Oberst*," the Lieutenant protested, "I do not believe they are Bulgarians! They do not speak Bulgarian!"

"How do you propose to prove," the Colonel said, "that they do not speak Bulgarian? Possibly they did not care to speak it with you, or possibly they did not understand your Bulgarian, but that does not prove that they could not speak it if they chose to. Is this a *Sprachschule* or a frontier control post? Your business is simply to check whether persons who want to pass here are authorized to do so. I do not want to be responsible for any complications with a friendly government. These gentlemen have the authority to cross the frontier. It is set down in their papers, here. There should have been no delay in passing them. You owe them an apology."

"I owe them an apology—?" the Lieutenant began, almost breathless with indignation and surprise.

"Exactly, *Herr Oberleutnant*," said the Colonel, gazing fixedly at the junior officer. "You owe them an apology." He handed him the passports. "Pass them."

The Lieutenant, extremely red in the face, and obviously conscious that the Colonel was watching him, came up to us, saluted stiffly, and said: "I beg your pardon, gentlemen. You may proceed."

The guards lifted the road barrier. We got into the car, and started down the road. As we turned through the rocky defile, the road straightened out, and we saw another barrier ahead of us—the entrance into Switzerland. None of us uttered a word. We looked ahead of us in a daze, hardly daring to believe in this last piece of good fortune.

A moment later, we stopped to show our papers to the Swiss guards. They glanced at them, saluted, and then one of the men said: "Oh yes, Messrs. Popov, Miladinov, Zheliev—wasn't a fourth gentleman going to be with you? We were expecting you."

Expecting us? Pecquot didn't seem to be surprised.

"So, you knew we were coming?"

"Yes," said the guard, "two days ago your friend, Monsieur Darceau, came here with a British gentleman and an official from Berne. Here is your permit for entry to Switzerland. Everything is arranged,

and we have been instructed to facilitate your trip in every manner. Have you enough gasoline to continue your trip? And by the way, your friend Darceau is waiting for you at the Hotel Baur au Lac in Zurich."

XLIV

The Price of Freedom

WE SAT about a table on the pleasant lawn of the hotel, looking out over the blue waters of the Zürichersee, with its backdrop of snow-covered mountains. We seemed to be in a different world after the war-torn countries we had passed through. Here people could still sit quietly over a cool drink at the lakeside, and watch the white lake steamers ply slowly to and fro, or listen to the gurgle of the Limmat as its water poured swiftly from the lake. We seemed far from war and removed by ages, instead of hours, from the prison fortress of Königstein.

Darceau was eager to hear how things had gone, so we had to tell him all about the events of the last two days.

"I am beginning to believe that my system really works," said Pecquot.

"What is your system?" Darceau asked.

"My system is simply to base my plans more on luck than on brains," Pecquot answered. "Perhaps it's more of a superstition than a system. It would have been quite impossible to have foreseen all the difficulties that arose during the escape from Königstein—so the only solution was to trust to luck.

"For instance, take the case of the ferry. We could have turned back when we learned that the guard had been changed—but we decided to go ahead and everything was fine. Sheer luck! Or that incident on the Swiss frontier! Who could have foreseen that one of the few German officers in the world who speaks Bulgarian would be precisely at that post? It was useless to try to protect ourselves in advance against such a small risk by any other means but counting on luck. What else could we have done—learned Bulgarian? But

luck carried the day—that German colonel was simply providential. There's no use trying to reason about it. It was luck, pure luck—which, gentlemen, is allowed for in the Pecquot system."

"It was remarkable," said Darceau. "That Colonel had every reason to suspect you after what the Lieutenant told him."

"It must have been that he was really afraid of diplomatic complications, as he said," ventured Rensac. "But I must say we were certainly lucky, and it may be due to our friend Pecquot's unshakable faith in his luck. Such fidelity ought to be requited, certainly. Pecquot, you were really wonderful and if you are lucky, I must insist that you are also a shrewd planner. It is due to your merit that we are here today."

"Too bad we had to leave General Verger behind," said Pecquot, his face darkening . . . and I felt he was thinking of some one else also.

"Yes, it's a shame," said Rensac. "Poor Verger, so eager to take up the fight again! But Pecquot, you didn't tell us—where do we go from here? When do you expect us to return to France? The command is yours, you know. It is up to you to decide!"

"Thank you, *mon général*," said Pecquot, "with your permission, I propose that . . ."

We did not learn the rest of the sentence because suddenly Philippe Aramond appeared before us.

"*Mon cher général, enfin!* Glad to meet you under the free sky of Switzerland," he exclaimed, and grasped Rensac's hand. "Mighty glad to see you! You may of course count entirely on my discretion—for I notice the newspapers have not yet announced your escape . . . I see you are in good company—I believe I know all these gentlemen—may I sit with you for a minute?" And without waiting for an answer, he pulled a chair up to the table and joined our group.

"What do you mean, Aramond?" said Pecquot, somewhat rudely. "What's this talk about an escape? You don't know what you're talking about. You're just trying to pump us with your bluff!"

I thought Pecquot somewhat unwise in showing his annoyance so plainly. I expected Aramond to retort with equal heat. Instead he broke into a roar of laughter.

"So, I don't know what I'm talking about," he chuckled. "Very

good, very good, my dear Popov, or, pardon me, Pecquot. So you really believe that I don't know what is going on and you imagine you know much more than I do? Didn't I tell you when I met you in Vichy that I'm an extraordinarily well-informed person? So I'm bluffing, am I? Ask my friends Bassert and Colonel Schleiter if I'm bluffing."

"I don't know your friends Bassert and Schleiter," said Pecquot, "and if I did, I might not be interested in their opinions."

Aramond laughed again. "But you do know Bassert and Schleiter," he insisted, "and not many hours ago you were vitally interested in their opinions. So you don't know Bassert, the chief guard of the Königstein ferry, or that *charming* Colonel Schleiter, who arrived with such à propos in Singen to get you out of trouble with an ambitious young lieutenant? You see, I have friends everywhere—and you can thank me that they were at hand when you got yourself into trouble."

"I don't understand," said Rensac. "What did you have to do with this?"

"Oh, not much," answered Aramond, with a smile, "except that I tried to be helpful and fill in the gaps whenever our fiery young friend here left one. That's all. It's not worth while having connections if one doesn't know how to use them in behalf of those who deserve it—like yourself, General. But I've already chattered too much. My train leaves in half an hour . . . I shall be very glad to see you one of these days in Vichy, General de Rensac . . . we will have many things to talk about! Very glad to have met you again, Captain Darceau. Civilian clothes become you. Good-bye, Mr. Lambert, good-bye, Mr. Pecquot."

And he was gone.

"What a damn fool I am," Pecquot burst out, furiously, "a silly, bloody fool. 'My system! My luck!' And I almost made you believe it! We thought we were very clever engineering the escape, and all the time this fellow was busy straightening out our blunders. *Mon général*, you thanked me before for having conducted the escape so well. I don't deserve your thanks—apparently you could have walked out of Königstein, if you had wanted to."

"I don't believe it," said Rensac, with a frown, "this fellow might

have been helpful here and there, through his connections—but if it had not been for you, Pecquot, I would still be in prison.”

And he rose to go to his room.

“I can quite well imagine how Aramond might have facilitated our passage on the ferry and through the frontier with his German connections,” I said, after the general had left us, “and I imagine if we had had other difficulties, he might have solved them too. He must have had us watched all the time. That wasn’t too difficult once he knew about our plans. But what I can’t figure out is how he found out about them in the first place.”

“Oh, that was no miracle,” said Pecquot. “You see, I’ve stopped believing in miracles now. Don’t you remember when the fellow called me Popov back in Vichy? Once he found out that I used a Bulgarian passport, he must have undertaken a little investigation at the Bulgarian Legation in Vichy—money opens all doors—and there he probably saw the photographs of our group, including Rensac’s on Bulgarian passport blanks. After that it was easy. If only I’d known what he was up to!”

“Perhaps it’s better that you didn’t, Jacques,” Darceau said, “because we didn’t lose in not knowing what was going on. Aramond was really helpful.”

“I don’t care for any help from that rascal or from any of his German friends!” Pecquot almost shouted. “And I hope the General doesn’t care for it either!”

“I only wonder,” asked Darceau, “*why* he did all this? I can’t very well imagine what reason he may have for being helpful. Perhaps he really wanted to do some good in his life—such things happen, you know!”

“That *would* be a miracle,” said Pecquot. “Aramond never did anything in his life for any one except Aramond. We don’t know why he helped us today—but some day we’ll find out!”

From Zurich we went to Lausanne, in French Switzerland, where Pecquot had reserved rooms for us in the Hotel Beaurivage of Ouchy, below Lausanne on the shores of Lake Lemman.

Rensac was impatient to get back to France, but Pecquot explained that he was getting new papers for us through the French consulate

at Lausanne so that we could reenter France under our own identities, through some frontier point where there would be no German control.

"Besides," he said, "a few days' rest won't do us any harm."

A week dragged by, and still Pecquot did not notify us that our papers were ready. I was in no great hurry. The surroundings were pleasant, and it was a relief, for a short time, to be in a world where worries were at a minimum. Rensac and Darceau, however, were both anxious to return to France, and Pecquot himself seemed rather impatient and nervous. But I felt his impatience was for another reason; and he confessed it to me one evening as we sat together on a bench by the shore, looking out over the water of the lake towards the Dent du Midi on its far side.

"I think we'd better start back tomorrow, Lambert," he said. "Don't tell the others, but I've had the papers for several days. I was delaying—selfishly—for a personal reason. I shouldn't have done it, of course. But I think you know how I feel about Maria Günther—and she was to have met me here. I expected her not later than two days after our arrival. We had arranged it that way; and in Günther's car, on the way to the elevator, when the others thought she was unconscious, she managed to whisper in my ear, 'Wait for me!' Well, she hasn't shown up. There's been no message. And today I telephoned her family in Basle. They've heard nothing either. I don't know what's happened, but it's not fair to hold you others up."

"You can always leave word for her here, in case she arrives," I said.

"I'll do that, of course," Pecquot said. "But I'm worried. I'm afraid something is wrong. Do you suppose Günther suspected her because of that faint? Well, there's nothing I can do about it now."

Later that evening, in the lobby of the hotel, Pecquot announced to the others that they would be able to return to France the following day.

"Good," said Rensac. "I'm anxious to go to Vichy and report my escape to the Marshal."

"Don't you suppose he knows about it already?" Darceau asked.

"Perhaps not," Pecquot answered. "After all, there hasn't been a

word about it in the German papers. There couldn't have been! We've been watching them too carefully to have missed that story. It may be that they're keeping it quiet, still hoping to catch the General before he gets out of Germany."

"Then the Marshal will certainly be pleased to learn the news," Darceau said.

"Perhaps he will," Rensac returned, "and perhaps he won't."

A few hours after our arrival in Vichy, the papers appeared with tremendous banners: "Rensac Escapes from Königstein!" It was the greatest sensation since the armistice—but how it had occurred, no one knew. Some of the papers printed fantastic suppositions, highly amusing to us, who knew how it had been done. From Germany, there was still no explanation, nothing but silence—though later the Reich was to demand again and again that Rensac be returned, vainly, since public opinion was violent against his extradition.

I was anxious to return to Admiral Beaulieu. I left the excitement of Vichy behind me, and took the train from Marseilles. There I found that my first duty was to console Mme. Verger, who had at first expected, when she saw the headlines, that her husband also had probably gotten out, and was bitterly disappointed when she found no mention of his name. I told her what had happened, and raised her hopes by saying that if we could spirit one man out of prison, there was no reason why we couldn't do the same for another. But privately, I had no belief that we could make the same trick work a second time. Either we would have to find something new, or give up.

Pecquot joined us in Marseilles a few days later. He was in civilian costume again—out of the Army. Gabriel had telegraphed the War Ministry informing them that he had ordered Pecquot back to France, and asking for a replacement for him to continue the mission, and to Pecquot he had telegraphed advising him to ask his return to the reserve. It was obvious that he understood very well what had happened, though of course he couldn't accuse Pecquot in a telegram, particularly one sent from Germany.

"It's back to the fight for me," he said, "and to tell you the truth, I'm very pleased about it. For one thing, I think I may want to go

back to Germany again, to see if I can find out what happened to Maria."

"Wait a while first," I suggested. "Mme. Verger has written to her husband to ask about the effect of the escape, and at my request she inquired about Maria as well."

The answer was not long in coming. In the restricted vocabulary of our code, Verger was not able to tell us very much, only that the disappearance was the subject of no official explanation to the prisoners, who did not know whether it was an escape, a kidnapping à la Dubert, or a release. However, Günther's anger had given the show away, and reports had trickled through, apparently, as near as we could guess, from Helmuth or other German soldiers to the orderlies, which made it clear that Rensac had escaped, and also that he must have done so on the occasion of the moving picture show. From all this it seemed that Aramond's German friends must have worked independently from Günther and that he wasn't in the know. It was difficult to tell how close Günther had come to guessing the means of escape. One indication seemed to show that he had figured it out incorrectly, for all the guards who had been on that assignment were sent to the front, and replaced by new men. But a report of a violent quarrel with Maria might have meant that he had guessed her part in it, or, perhaps, only that he had opposed her suggestion that she return to Switzerland.

From his window, Verger said, he could see that bars had been put over the windows of Maria's apartment. But the shades remained untouched. Perhaps she had nothing to say.

"He's made a prisoner of her!" Pecquot exclaimed. "That's why she didn't meet me! He has shut her up like a beast in a cage! But Herr Günther hasn't seen the last of me yet."

Today I am far from France, with the Fighting French on one of General de Gaulle's destroyers. I am back in the war against the Germans, whose prisoner I was not so long ago. Slowly Königstein fades into memory . . . but letters I receive from time to time bring back the past. A few days ago, I heard from Admiral Beaulieu from London. He also has joined de Gaulle.

"I have no news of Rensac," Beaulieu wrote. "Before I left France

we had a long conversation. He told me that he might come here also, but up to now I have not heard from him. In Königstein, all of us knew where we belonged—everything was so simple—all that mattered was to get out of there and enter the fight. Men—like animals—try instinctively to escape from their cages, though they may not realize what will happen when they get out. Rensac may still enter the fight, and when he does he will be a good fighter—but right now, I don't like the people who surround him. Verger was right: we can't rebuild a new France in a new world if we try to work with those who dragged her down to where she is now."

This morning I received a letter from Pecquot, written in France but mailed in London, a token of his continued ability to pass his messages across hostile frontiers.

"Do you remember, my dear Lambert," wrote Pecquot, "the time during our trip through Germany and Switzerland when R. (R. stands for Rensac, of course) would not make a move without asking what I thought of it? All that has changed now. I have tried to see him several times, but he is always too busy for me. I could get no nearer to him than Darceau. R. has no use for my advice any more, though I tried to convey it to him through Darceau. Often he is closeted with Aramond. I don't know yet what they're planning. We wondered in Switzerland what Aramond's reasons were for helping the escape. They are much clearer now—though probably not for R. I don't believe he realizes that Aramond helped him to escape solely to create an obligation—but that's the way it looks to me now. And R. certainly has given no thought to the fact that Aramond was in a position to help only because he has German partners who may be more influential than Hitler himself. What they want to use R. for I don't know yet—it is probable that Aramond and his friends are working on some plan in which R.'s rôle will be simply to erase their own somber record. . . . It is the same sort of sinister scheming which brought about France's downfall. I only hope that when R. realizes what Aramond and his friends are up to, he will have the courage to get rid of the whole crowd.

"I'm continuing my work—you know what I mean—and I'm glad to hear that you and Beaulieu are back in the fight. Where and how one fights is not important, as long as the goal is visible. And today

that goal appears clearer and clearer to everybody in France—the sufferings of the occupation are, perhaps, good for something. Much of that suffering does not come from material discomfort—it comes from the irresistible yearning for freedom, for that freedom which we did not appreciate sufficiently when we had it. It is true that we want it to be more beautiful in the future than it ever was in the past . . .

“Often I think of Königstein. Maria is still there—I suppose—and I would lie if I tried to pretend that she means nothing to me. Verger is still there also. From what you and Beaulieu told me, I imagine that he, with his spirit, would be of greater service in this battle than many others . . . I believe more and more that the will to fight is not sufficient if the right kind of spirit is not there to inspire it.

“To escape from Königstein is one thing. To escape from the mud and errors of the past is even more important. But perhaps I am asking for too much, and we should be thankful for what we have. Who said that in life there is no happy ending? Perhaps there isn’t . . . but we can always hope.”

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